Training Future Surgeons – low cost, large benefit

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The difference in operating times between trainee surgeons and their more qualified colleagues may not be as long as previously thought, delegates to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons’ 84th Annual Scientific Congress have been told.

Recent study findings, led by retired NZ orthopaedic surgeon Allan Panting, suggest that concerns by patients scheduled for surgery that a trainee surgeon will result in a reduced outcome for the operation, could well be unfounded.

The study that assessed more than 1,000 hip replacements over the course of ten years, demonstrated that, while Trainees may take slightly longer to complete an operation, there was no statistically significant difference in mortality or revision rates when compared to a qualified surgeon.

“A qualified surgeon will typically complete a hip arthroplasty in 85 minutes.

“On average, we found that a Surgical Trainee will only take an extra 14 minutes,” Mr Panting said.

“When one considers that there is no significant difference in the quality of outcome, adding approximately 14 minutes to the operation time is a low price for the immense benefits that practical experience affords a Surgical Trainee.”

Mr Panting presented his findings at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Annual Scientific Congress, being held this week in Perth.

Over a thousand surgeons from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons as well as international surgeons from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh are gathering at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre this week for a series of workshops, discussions, Plenaries and masterclasses across a broad range of surgical issues.

The 2015 conference also pays tribute to the centenary of Gallipoli by analysing ethics and developments in surgery over the past 100 years, in war and peace time, as well as exploring what the future may hold in surgical progress.

About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

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