Surgeons and Medibank working together to improve healthcare for Australians

The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is collaborating with leading private health insurer Medibank to improve and progress understanding of variation in surgical practice in Australia.

Currently, surgeons have limited access to information on indicators such as the average length of patient stay, rates of readmission or admission to ICU, and prices charged for services, for different procedures within their speciality, particularly in the private sector.

“Surgeons have been waiting for information like this for a long time. We’re pleased to be able to provide our Fellows with meaningful data and insights, which may help them to improve their delivery of care in the private sector, and most importantly, improve patient outcomes,” RACS President Professor David Watters said.

Under the collaboration, Medibank will provide RACS with de-identified administrative data and the College will then apply its clinical expertise to analyse and interpret the information and produce a report for its surgeons.

The first report, to be published on Friday 29 April 2016, will look at surgical variance in general surgery, including the following common general surgery procedures:

- Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy;
- Bariatric surgery (including gastric band and sleeve) procedures;
- Bowel resection procedures;
- Hernia procedures;
- Gastroscopy procedures; and
- Colonoscopy (including endoscopic and interventional) procedures.

Future reports will look at common procedures within other surgical specialities including urology, vascular, orthopaedic, and ear, nose and throat surgery.

Medibank’s Chief Medical Officer Dr Linda Swan says that providing useful information to clinicians about variation in surgical practice is key to improving the delivery of healthcare.

“Medibank is absolutely committed to improving the health outcomes of patients, to improving patient experiences, and to improving efficiencies in the health system.”

“We’re delighted to be working with RACS to provide greater transparency and information directly to surgeons to help achieve this,” Dr Swan said.

“These reports align with our purpose to provide continual education and information to our Fellows, and we look forward to further work with Medibank, and also collaborating with other organisations that hold similar data sets,” Prof Watters said.
RACS and Medibank will look for future opportunities to develop the information provided in these reports so that they are as useful as possible for all clinicians.


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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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