

Training in Spinal Surgery

Advice from Prof W Angus Wallace, Chair, SAC in T&O Surgery 9th February 2010

Introduction

Spinal Surgery involves surgical knowledge and skills from two surgical specialties - Orthopaedic Surgery and Neurosurgery. Both myself and the SAC in Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery believe that the complexity of training in Spinal Surgery means that it is unlikely that it will be possible to complete Spinal training within the current 8 years of surgical training and that a 9th year (an additional Advanced Training Post (ATP) Fellowship year) will be required in future.

Overseeing and Monitoring Spinal Surgical Training

We believe that a new "Interface Group for Spinal Surgery" should be set up by JCST. WAW has already proposed this to the Chair of JCST some months ago. This will require some central funding support from the Department of Health. This Interface Group would act in a similar way to the current Interface Groups in Hand Surgery, Aesthetic Surgery and Cleft Lip and Palate Surgery.

We would recommend the membership of such a group as:-

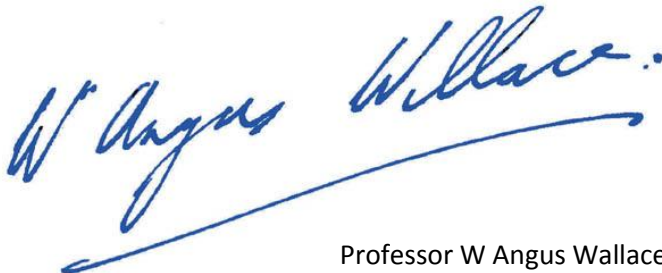
1. An Independent Spinal Surgeon as Chair
2. Senior Representatives (Chair of Vice-Chair) of the SACs in T&O and Neuro-Surgery
3. Three Orthopaedic Spinal Surgeons
4. Three Neurosurgical Spinal Surgeons
5. One representative from the DH

Guidelines for recognising the CCT in Spinal Surgery

The SAC in Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery believes that the CCT in Spinal Surgery should be extended to incorporate an extra year (StR9) of training. By so doing the training in Spinal Surgery can be overseen by the body responsible for overseeing Spinal Surgery Training – the Spinal Surgical Interface Group. If training is carried out post-CCT this would take Spinal Training outside the responsibility of the JCST and a separate organisation would need to be created to address this. This would be expensive and is unlikely to work as well as the Interface Group would work.

Funding Spinal Surgical Training

We recommend that the funding model which has been developed for both Hand Surgery and Aesthetic Surgery, supported by Professor Davinder Sandhu (Postgraduate Dean/Head of Education NHS Education, Severn Deanery) is a good model for the funding for Spinal Surgery in the future. The only difference would be that the Advanced Training Post (ATP) Fellowships would be provided for Spinal Surgery over a two year period - for both StR8 and StR9 years.



Professor W Angus Wallace
Chair, SAC in Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgery