



THE SOCIETY OF BRITISH NEUROLOGICAL SURGEONS

NCEPOD SAH STUDY LAUNCH FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2013

In 2009 the Society of British Neurological Surgeons (SBNS) submitted a proposal to NCEPOD for a comprehensive study of the management and outcome of aneurysmal subarachnoid haemorrhage (aSAH). The study was accepted early in 2011 and the work was undertaken last year. The study is unique in that it has tracked a cohort of aSAH patients through from their initial diagnosis and subsequent specialist care to their final outcome, be that rehabilitation and recovery or death. The study has focused on identifying remediable factors in the care of aSAH patients that might improve outcomes.

Recent studies have confirmed that the case fatality of aSAH in the United Kingdom has been declining steadily over the last 10 years and that the outcomes of UK patients now match those of the best institutions in Europe and North America. Nevertheless, the NCEPOD study demonstrates that further improvements could be achieved by earlier diagnosis, prompt transfer to regional neurosurgical units, timely management of the complications of subarachnoid haemorrhage and interventions to secure the aneurysm by endovascular coiling or surgical clipping at the most appropriate time. The report also highlights the importance of providing aSAH patients with comprehensive in-patient and out-patient neurological rehabilitation in order to optimise their recovery.

In responding to the findings of the report the SBNS will lead the development of a National Subarachnoid Haemorrhage Care Pathway bringing together the expertise of all specialists involved in the care of aSAH patients. The pathway will be based on currently-accepted guidelines, consensus statements, published medical evidence and best practice identified by the NCEPOD study. The pathway will incorporate standards for patient care to be used by Health Service Commissioners.

The SBNS has been establishing a Neurosurgical National Audit Programme. A national SAH audit has been piloted as part of that programme. This will now be developed into a full national audit representing all neurosurgical units caring for SAH patients. The standards set out in the National SAH Care Pathway will be incorporated into the audit.

The SBNS will set up a working party jointly with the UK Neuro-Intervention group, Royal College of Radiologists and other stakeholders to determine whether extending the current national standard of providing aneurysmal intervention within 48 hours to providing interventions seven days a week would result in improved outcomes.

The SBNS is grateful to all of the clinicians who contributed to the initial assessment of patient records, to the local NCEPOD co-ordinators, to the expert advisors and the staff of NCEPOD for their efforts in completing this important study.