

NON-TECHNICAL SKILLS

Surgery



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Decision making is considered an important skill for surgeons, particularly since risk management and decisions must be made at every stage of a patient's surgery. However, to date, research has tended to focus on judgements and risk assessments made prior to a patient's operation, as opposed to decisions made in the operating room during the surgery. The aim of the current research project is to examine surgeons' intraoperative risk assessment and decision making.

Surgeons' intraoperative decision making and risk management

Critical decision making interviews were conducted with 24 consultant surgeons. The surgeons were asked to recall cases and select important decisions made during those cases to discuss in detail. The results indicated that surgeons used both intuitive and analytical modes of decision making. Surgeons risk assessment, risk tolerance and decision strategies were guided by their personal level of risk tolerance.

The current project shows videos (n=3) of laparoscopic cholecystectomy operations to consultant (n=15) and trainee (n=15) surgeons. The surgeons are asked a series of questions at identified decision points in the videos. Comparisons will be made among the two groups and between consultants and trainees to understand more about surgical risk management and decision making.

Publications

Pauley, K., Flin, R., Yule, S., & Youngson, G. G. (2011). Surgeons' intraoperative decision making and risk management. *American Journal of Surgery*, 202(4), 375 – 381.

[http://www.americanjournalofsurgery.com/article/S0002-9610\(11\)00124-3/abstract](http://www.americanjournalofsurgery.com/article/S0002-9610(11)00124-3/abstract)