

PRESS RELEASE



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MDDUS COMMENTS ON CRITICAL ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS REPORT

The UK-wide medical defence organisation MDDUS has issued a comment on the new Royal College of Surgeons and Department of Health report indicating that the peri-operative care of patients undergoing emergency non-cardiac general surgery is "frequently disjointed, protracted and not always patient centred".

Dr John Holden, senior medico-legal adviser at MDDUS, says: "All doctors have a fundamental and overriding ethical duty to make the care of patients their first concern. In achieving this aim all doctors must recognise and work within their limits of competence and seek more senior help and advice where necessary."

Dr Holden adds: "Doctors who delegate care or treatment must be satisfied that the other clinician has the qualifications, experience, knowledge and skills to provide the care or treatment involved. The report reflects this ethical duty and additionally states that delegated staff should have sufficient manpower and be adequately free of competing responsibilities.

"Risk to patients may be reduced by doctors handing over to colleagues according to a clear and effective procedure, before going off duty."

Ends

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Note to editors

The Royal College of Surgeons report can be viewed here: <http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/publications/docs/higher-risk-surgical-patient>

MDDUS (The Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland) is a medical and dental defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medico- and dento-legal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK. For further information on MDDUS go to www.mddus.com.