Commission on the Future of Surgery

Terms of Reference

Purpose
The purpose of the Commission on the Future of Surgery is to set out a compelling and credible vision of the future advances in medicine and technology, and how those developments will affect the delivery of surgical care in the United Kingdom. In particular, the Commission will consider what the future of surgery is likely to look like for patients in five years, could look like in ten years, and might be in 15 to 20 years.

The role of the commissioners
The commissioners will advise on the areas of change and development expected and predicted during that time frame, on who to contact to understand those developments, and how to answer the questions central to the scope of the Commission. They will be involved in seeking and collecting evidence from a wide range of stakeholders and contributors, and in the analysis of the evidence received.

Scope
With initial consideration as to how the burden of disease and the delivery of clinical care have changed since the creation of the National Health Service in the UK, the Commission will draw on UK and international evidence to reflect approximately 20 years into the future to consider the likely landscape of surgery and surgical care delivery.

In doing so, the Commission’s aims are to

1. Explore and identify the innovations that will most likely impact surgical treatment
   - For example, the Commission will look at developments in minimally invasive surgery, robot-assisted surgery, nanotechnology, radiology and imaging, artificial intelligence, genetics, oncology, 3D printing and planning, regenerative medicine, pharmacology, and anaesthesia.

2. Evaluate the possible relevance and value of those innovations, and their implications for
   - Patients and their choice of treatment in a rapidly changing health and social care system
   - The training and role of future surgeons
   - Staffing and career pathways of the surgical team
   - Ethical and regulatory challenges
   - Patient safety
   - Clinical outcomes

3. This will be done taking into account advances in digital technology and data storage / transfer, and also medical and wider health system challenges affecting the future delivery of surgery, for example the risk of antimicrobial resistance, the development of new non-surgical interventions, the emergence of new care models, or the affordability challenges facing modern health systems
International evidence will also be considered given the developments that are occurring on a global scale. As a result, the delivery of surgery may become a more global commodity and the Commission will consider the potential impact of this on service delivery, teaching and training.

The Commission will not try to predict future NHS funding arrangements or government policy.

**Independence**
Any recommendations or findings of the Commission will be independent of the Royal College of Surgeons and based on the work it carries out. The Commission will be supported in its operations by the Royal College of Surgeons.

**Timeline**
The Commission aims to report by Autumn 2018.