**Are we following the NCEPOD recommendations for emergency surgery in elderly patients?**

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**Background:**

A National Confidential Enquiry of Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD) report**1** in 2010 highlighted the failure of the NHS in providing good quality clinical care for elderly patients undergoing emergency surgery. This report produced important guidelines aimed at improving the emergency pre-operative and post-operative care of elderly patients.

**Methods:**

This audit compared the care given to 22 patients over the age of 80 who had undergone emergency general surgery (excluding trauma and orthopaedics, urology and vascular) in the Bristol Royal Infirmary between January and September 2012 to the NCEPOD guidelines.

**Results:**

Of the 11 processes audited, the trust was not compliant in 4 of the recommended guidelines. Most notably, none of the patients received the recommended routine input from the Care of the Elderly team (COE), despite over 67% of all post-operative complications resulting from medical illnesses and two thirds of recorded deaths secondary to medical causes.

**Key messages:**

There is a clear need to increase the daily input from the COE team in managing acutely ill elderly surgical patients with scope to introduce a local trust protocol triggering appropriate referral of patients to COE from general surgery.

1. Wilkinson K, Martin IC, Gough MJ, Stewart JAD, Lucas SB, Freeth H, Bull B, Mason M. Elective & Emergency Surgery in the Elderly: An Age Old Problem (2010). London: NCEPOD; 2010 November [cited 2012 November 14]. Available from <http://www.ncepod.org.uk/2010eese.htm>.