BSc in Reproductive & Developmental Sciences &

BSc in Surgery and Anaesthesia Project Outline 2011-2012

**Project Title:** A longitudinal survey study on surgical complications and patient wellbeing

**Academic Supervisor:** Prof. Charles Vincent (Professor of Clinical Safety)

**Division:** Surgery & Cancer

**Section:** Surgery

**Co-supervisor:** Mr. Omar Faiz (Senior lecturer in colorectal surgery)

**Who will be responsible for day-to-day supervision?**

Anna Pinto (PhD student, psychologist)

**Contact Details of Person whom Medical Student should contact for further details:**

**Name:** Anna Pinto **Email:** a.pinto@imperial.ac.uk **Tel:** 020 7594 9725

**Group’s Research Interest:**

Patient safety: Aftermath of surgical complications both from surgeons’ and patients’ perspectives

(Double click the appropriate check box to indicate your choices below)

**Is this a clinical  or laboratory  project?**

**Suitable project for: Reproductive and Development**  **Sciences** Yes No

**Surgery and Anaesthesia** Yes No

**Synopsis of project (background/research question/methods to be used/relevant key references):**

Patients may suffer both physically and psychologically from medically induced injuries (Vincent, 1996). Despite the fact that there is wealth of anecdotal data suggesting that patients who suffer adverse events in their care experience reduced wellbeing there is negligible empirical research on the psychosocial impact of medically induced incidents on patients. Early findings from surgery suggest a wide range of psychological outcomes related with the experience of surgical accidents such as higher levels of distress than people who had experienced serious accidents or bereavements, reported pain levels comparable, over a year after surgery, to untreated postoperative pain, and psychosocial adjustment worse than in patients with serious medical conditions (Vincent et al, 1993).

In this study we focus on surgical complications on the basis that complications in the operating room are often associated with profound consequences for patients (e.g. need for major reoperations, induced long-term disabilities, long hospital stay etc.) (Gawande et al., 1999). As well as identifying the association of surgical complications with patient wellbeing (i.e. quality of life, depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress), we also aim to explore broader psychosocial predictors of such outcomes (i.e. coping strategies, social support, complication-related characteristics, institutional support). We believe that such findings will be highly informative for the design of interventions that could help patients and their families cope more effectively with the complications of surgery.

To this end, we have designed a questionnaire aimed at surgical patients assessing the above described concepts. Comparisons between surgical patients who experienced complications in their care and those who did not will allow us to quantify the psychological impact of surgical complications on patients as well as the importance of different predictor variables as outlined above. Administration of the questionnaire at different time-points after the patients’ discharge will also allow us to explore the long-term impact of complications which is largely ignored in the existing surgical literature.

**Key references**

Gawande, A.A., et al., *The incidence and nature of surgical adverse events in Colorado and Utah in 1992.* Surgery, 1999. **126**(1): p. 66-75.

Vincent, C., *Patient safety*. 2006, Edinburgh: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone.

Vincent, C.A., T. Pincus, and J.H. Scurr, *Patients' experience of surgical accidents.* Quality in Health Care, 1993. **2**(2): p. 77-82.

Will the research involve work done under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) 1986 Act? Yes No

**If YES*,***

Will the student be required to undergo Home Office training? Yes No

Are the appropriate project and personal licences in place? Yes No

**Project licence**:

Licensee

Date of issue

Number

**Personal licence**:

Licensee

Number

**Will the research involve the use of genetically modified tissue?** Yes No

**If YES**

Has the work been approved by the relevant GM Committee Yes No

Date approval was granted

Reference Number

**Will the project involve work on human subjects, human tissue or access to confidential patient information?** Yes No

## If YES

## has ethical approval been obtained Yes No

## Date approval was granted: 31 August 2011

## IC REC or IRAS REC number: NRES Committee London-Dulwich

**Note: Approval for any of the above MUST be in place before the student begins the project.**

**A risk assessment form will be required.**

**Project Payment**: I have an F account Yes No

## If you have an F account please give full account code: