

EuroSurg: a new European student-driven research network in surgery

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

In 2013, a group of medical students and surgical trainees in the UK founded Student Audit and Research in Surgery (STARSurg; www.starsurg.org), a national, student-driven research collaborative. STARSurg enables students to participate in high-quality studies, developing skills that will help them to become research-active clinicians in the future [1]. More than 250 students across 109 hospitals participated in STARSurg's first study, collecting prospective outcomes data on 1500 patients undergoing major gastrointestinal surgery. All collaborators were PubMed citable co-authors on the resulting publication [2]. The STARSurg network has now grown to include all medical schools in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, with more than 180 hospitals registered to participate in its most recent study.

In many countries, students find it difficult to become involved in surgical research. Pan-European collaboration may provide unique opportunities for students to engage in research, whilst simultaneously developing essential research skills. A meeting of students interested in developing an international student research network was convened at the European Society of Coloproctology (ESCP) annual meeting in September 2015. Having discussed the student-driven research model developed by STARSurg, the students resolved to work together to deliver an international, student-driven cohort study in early 2016. Following a lively discussion guided by experienced surgeons, the students chose to explore the relationship between obesity and major complications following gastrointestinal surgery. This study will be based on the Determining Surgical Complications in the Overweight (DISCOVER) study that was successfully run in the UK and Ireland by STARSurg in 2014 [3].

The resulting collaborative group has become known as EuroSurg (www.eurosurg.org). It has an active membership in Ireland, Italy, Spain, Turkey, the Netherlands and the UK. In each country, students, supported by STARSurg and prominent ESCP members, are

focusing on developing national networks to deliver an international cohort study with the aim of presenting the results at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the ESCP.

The social media dissemination strategies developed by STARSurg [4] are already proving successful [5], with students from over 60 universities already recruited to participate. We invite students and surgeons across Europe to become involved in this exciting project by signing up on our website (www.eurosurg.org).

References

- 1

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EuroSurg Twitter page (@EuroSurg), online at <https://twitter.com/EuroSurg> (accessed 11 2015).

Appendix

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