

The Tri-STAR network

R Fry, A Pang, J Humphries

Dear Sir,

I would like to make your readers aware of the Tri-Service Trainee Audit and Research (Tri-STAR) network.

In 2013, the Research and Audit Federation of Trainees (RAFT) was formed to encourage collaboration between the burgeoning number of anaesthetic trainee research networks (TRNs) that existed at the time. The benefit of collaborative research has been well demonstrated in recent years with multiple anaesthetic National Audit Projects, run by the Royal College of Anaesthetists, leading to change in practice and improved patient care. Trainees can also benefit from involvement in collaborative research, with project involvement possible despite the disruption of frequent rotation between hospital sites. TRNs provide trainees with the opportunity to be involved in meaningful projects and to gain experience in research principles and methodology, in addition to publication and presentation opportunities at a regional or national level.

Tri-STAR was formed in July 2017 to offer support and encourage collaborative research amongst tri-service anaesthesia trainees. As a military TRN the aim is to engage defence trainees in projects with military relevance and the potential to improve the practice of military anaesthesia in future operations, while developing skills in research methodology and providing opportunities for presentation and publication. Tri-STAR is well supported by the Academic Department of Military Anaesthesia &

Critical Care, with a wealth of experience in the Defence Professor of Anaesthesia and several Senior Lecturers, who can be called upon for advice on project design, ethics and literature.

The unique structure of the Defence Postgraduate Medical Deanery (DPMD), which straddles geographical boundaries, allows Tri-STAR to operate effectively as a means to conduct national research.

Although it is still early days, Tri-STAR has managed to conduct a number of studies; one project surveyed attitudes towards continuous peripheral nerve blockade (CPNB) as an analgesia technique in trauma patients. CPNB was shown during Op HERRICK and Op TELIC to be an effective method of analgesia, but these techniques are not common within the NHS, leading to a lack of training opportunity and familiarity. Following on from this project there is now work ongoing to develop a specific military teaching programme to include exposure to these techniques.

As always, the Tri-STAR committee is keen to hear from other trainees, whether they are trainees with ideas for projects that they wish to promulgate to a wide audience, or are those struggling to find ideas for the mandatory annual quality improvement project who wish to engage in something more relevant to the military medical community. All those wishing to get involved are welcome, and need only to contact one of the authors for more information, or follow our Twitter account @tristartrainees.

Authors

Surgeon Lieutenant Commander R Fry-Harris Royal Navy
Kings Hospital, London, UK
rebeccafray-harris@doctors.org.uk

Major A Pang RAMC
Sunderland Royal Hospital, Sunderland, UK

Squadron Leader J Humphreys RAF
Derriford Hospital, Plymouth