

# Mr Andrew SHELTON

Andrew Shelton, Johann Colin-Thome, David Story, Stephanie Poustie and Larry McNicol.  
Department of Anaesthesia, Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre

## Improving Postoperative Care Through Increased Surveillance.

### Abstract.

The Department of Anaesthesia at the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre has previously identified patient groups at increased risk of serious adverse events in the postoperative period. We developed a project that aimed to improve postoperative care through increased surveillance and enhanced medical and nursing management on the postoperative wards. We collected data on the frequency of serious adverse events in high-risk postoperative patients. We used these data as a baseline to evaluate the effect of the period of the intervention phase. During the intervention phase we carried out 600 interventions, an average of 2 per patient. The most frequent interventions were implementing oxygen therapy, chest physio, enhancing fluid balance management and calling the Medical Emergency Team. While it varied across wards, there was apparent systematic improvement in postoperative patient management.

Compared to the baseline period there was a 20% decrease in serious adverse events for every 100 patients. This is a clinically important improvement.

From the experience gained from this Project we intend to implement a major process change at the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre. This will be the combination of the Postoperative Surveillance and Intervention Project with the existing Acute Pain Service. We believe that this change will further enhance postoperative outcome.

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