

Ms Caroline Topping
HM Coroner's Court
Station Approach
Woking
Surrey
GU22 7AP
Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

9th February 2021

Dear Ms Topping,

Re: Regulation 28 Report – Action to Prevent Future Deaths dated 1st December 2020 following the conclusion of *The Inquest Touching the Death of Peter James Michael Unsworth*

I understand that the Royal College of Surgeons of England have already responded to you but they did invite our association to comment as your report related specifically to the field of orthopaedic surgery. We agree with the RCS letter and its sentiments.

Your report was discussed at length in Committee this week and we were all saddened to read the difficult circumstances that were described in your report and our sympathies go to the Unsworth family and friends.

Members of our Orthopaedic Committee recognise that this was always a complex case and one that was likely to fall outside existing Trust protocols for the prevention of thromboembolism in the perioperative period. Hence appropriate discussion, explanation, consent and documentation were essential prior to any surgery. Overall, we recognise with some sadness that this situation may not be as unusual as we would wish it to be in busy arthroplasty units with a need to titrate carefully the risks vs benefits of anticoagulant therapy. We appreciate that although the literature on VTE (venous thromboembolic) prophylaxis does consist of high quality randomised trials, in many studies, patients such as Mr Unsworth with a known history of VTE events are excluded. Thus the evidence to support shared decision making in complex cases is relatively sparse.

We are concerned that the relative risks of bleeding and increased infection vs thromboembolic problems are not well appreciated by physician colleagues and that existing hospital policies may not give advice on scenarios such as this.

The BOA will be taking this further. We produce BOAST documents (British Orthopaedic Association Standards) and will be setting up a short life working group involving haematology colleagues to see if it would be possible to produce relevant guidance on the management of such cases in the future.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon
Assoc Prof University College London
Vice President Elect BOA