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## European Society of Anaesthesiology Launched Safety Kit to Raise Safety Standards across Europe



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The European Society of Anaesthesiology (ESA) launched a safety starter kit containing a wide variety of essential resources to help raise safety standards in anaesthesiology across Europe. The kit was distributed on a memory stick at this year's Euroanaesthesia 2013 congress in Barcelona, Spain (1-4 June). The kit took three years to assemble, and was put together following the landmark 2010 [Helsinki Declaration on Patient Safety](#), a statement of EBA (European Board of Anaesthesiologists, section of UEMS) and ESA targeting the many factors that contribute to patient safety before, during, and after surgery.

"We didn't want the Helsinki Declaration to be something that had bold aims but didn't accomplish much," says Dr. Sven Staender, Chairman of EBA's/ESA's [Task Force For Patient Safety](#). "We've spent three years working with a range of experts both within the ESA and across our member countries' national associations to produce these essential materials to guide good practice and improve safety in our specialty."

The Helsinki Declaration states that steps must be taken to address the numerous human and technical factors that can affect patient safety, including drug and syringe labelling, checking equipment, difficult or failed intubation, bleeding, infections, and anaesthetic toxicity. It also requires anaesthesiology departments to collect data in order to produce annual reports on patient safety, so that improvement in safety practice can be tracked and exchange in knowledge be accomplished. The declaration currently has 297 signatories from across Europe, including ESA National Society members, individual hospital anaesthesiology departments and anaesthesiologists as well as supporting industrial companies.

- To cater for the multiple aims of the Helsinki Declaration, the safety starter kit contains the following:
- Selected Articles of the publication "Safety in Anaesthesia" (Best Practice and Research Clinical Anaesthesiology)
- The book on Patient safety by internationally recognised expert Charles Vincent
- A proposed template for an anaesthesia departmental safety report
- The text of the original Helsinki Declaration
- Hazard warnings published in countries that alert anaesthesiologists to important adverse events (examples provided from the UK, Germany and Switzerland).
- Powerpoint presentations plus audio podcasts of essential aspects of patient safety. Topics covered include e.g. human limitations in the operating room, and introduction to critical incident reporting
- Powerpoint presentations for basic lectures on patient safety / risk management including topics such as medication error, good communication and team work, simulation, engaging with patients and carers, and understanding clinical risk.
- Checklists for emergency management in the operating room, for situations such as those involving newborns, anaphylaxis, hypertension, hypotension etc.
- The WHO Safe Surgery Checklist
- A list of links to important internet resources

"These tools should help bring the Helsinki Declaration to life," adds Staender. "The starter kit is a collection of necessary resources to help fulfill the aims of the Helsinki declaration and to make it readily and easily available and useful for anaesthesiologists across Europe, and indeed Worldwide."

Of course, many of the practices and tools referred to in the starter kit may be commonplace in many hospitals in Europe. But ESA hopes that this starter kit will support hospitals, particularly those in the continually developing nations of Eastern Europe, that not yet have the standards of the Helsinki Declaration fully established.

Following the Euroanaesthesia congress, the ESA will publish the kit in a dedicated section of its website ([www.esahq.org](http://www.esahq.org)), and will also begin work on implementation of the Helsinki Declaration on a national level. Dr. Staender will remain in his role as Chairman to see the project through the next three years. "This must be done in a joint venture with the European Board of Anaesthesiology, with the National Anaesthesiologists Societies Committee of ESA and the individual national societies themselves," he says. "We will be working on a national or even departmental accreditation process that shall demonstrate the adherence to the principle of the Helsinki Declaration."

Source: European Society of Anaesthesiology (ESA)

