Presidential Letter

IAN SMITH

For me, the highlight of 2021 must surely be the final publication of “Day Case Surgery” in the Oxford Specialist Handbook series. This book has taken a couple of years to complete and has been written by many current and recent members of BADS Council, as well as other experts who have been frequent contributors to our association meetings and handbooks. We have also spent a lot of time editing this multi-authored work so that it has a consistent style and philosophy, thereby representing the collective view of our association.

We are fairly confident that this book fills an important gap in the market. There has not been a new British day surgery textbook for over ten years, during which time there have been enormous changes in our speciality. Furthermore, these earlier books, as well as more recent Scandinavian offerings, have focussed almost exclusively on anaesthesia and analgesia. In contrast, just like the ethos of BADS itself, this new publication is a truly multidisciplinary work, which devotes equal importance to surgical, nursing and anaesthetic aspects of care.

The book starts with an overview of ambulatory surgery and a very forward-looking chapter on the organisation of ambulatory services. Several chapters deal with preoperative assessment, selection criteria, general, local and regional anaesthesia as well as sedation, perioperative analgesia and the management of postoperative complications. The main focus of the book is on adults, but this is supplemented by a very comprehensive chapter on paediatric day surgery. A large chapter on surgical procedures is subdivided into nine different specialities and provides practical advice on managing a wide range of common, and not so common, day surgery procedures.

While the focus of this section is predominantly surgical, specific aspects of the anaesthetic and nursing care are also highlighted where these are fundamental to the overall management of the procedure. Nursing care is further and more broadly described in two dedicated chapters, one focussing on the basic principles, the other concerned with managing more advanced day surgery procedures. This is in turn supported by chapters on pushing the boundaries of day surgery and future developments in the speciality. BADS places considerable importance on the views of our patients and values lay input into the association. These aspects also feature heavily in the book, with chapters on outcome measures, patient safety and the patient’s experience.

Finally, the book concludes with a chapter on teaching and training in the day unit. As with the rest of the book, this too is multidisciplinary and looks at how we teach future generations of nurses, surgeons, anaesthetists and medical students.

It had originally been our intention to publish a BADS textbook of day surgery, but the financial risk of printing and distributing such a work on our own was thought to be too great, so we decided to “sell” the concept to an established publisher, in this case the prestigious Oxford University Press. This decision means that the association will not directly profit from sales of the book, but it also protects us against any potential losses and means that we have the marketing might of a large publisher to distribute the book widely and thereby spread our influence further. Although clearly part of the OUP brand, this is still very much a BADS book, with the association logo proudly and prominently displayed on the front cover. Working with a publisher also meant adhering to an existing style and format, but this could not have been better, as the style of the Oxford Specialist Handbooks is almost exactly what we had in mind from the earliest concept. This book is small and concise, fitting easily into a jacket pocket or briefcase, yet is packed with practical help and advice.

Instead of a heavily referenced, lengthy academic debate on the pros and cons of every issue, what you will find is a clear step by step guide of how to do it, written in concise terms by authors with copious practical experience in their fields. As many of the authors are leading day surgery practitioners who are actively and continually advancing the frontiers, it is also bang up to date. This is the essence of modern day surgery, distilled into small and manageable sections, each supported by suggested further reading for those who also want to see the underlying evidence.

We hope the book will be useful to surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses and all students working in elective short stay surgery and should also prove to be a useful reference to keep on the day surgery unit. It should be widely available by the time you read this.

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