

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists SURVEY RESEARCH POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Survey Research Policy is to provide guidance to researchers or investigators regarding the standards of survey research expected by ANZCA. ANZCA facilitated survey research must be soundly designed, promote safe and high quality patient care, respect the privacy and confidentiality of participants and avoid burdening Fellows and Trainees unnecessarily.

2. INTRODUCTION

In line with concerns of ANZCA Fellows, the Trials Group aims to avoid: 1) sending individual Fellows or Trainees excessive numbers of surveys; 2) surveys of poor scientific quality; and 3) poorly targeted surveys. Despite the widespread perception that surveys are easy to conduct, good survey research requires substantial planning, time and effort. Attention should be paid to rigorous survey design, careful implementation and robust data collection and analysis. A poorly conducted survey can lead to misleading or invalid conclusions, undermine confidence in survey research, and affect participation by the target population in future surveys.

ANZCA encourages the distribution of surveys to support research activities. The ANZCA Trials Group promotes good survey research and manages survey research activities on behalf of the College. ANZCA does not provide contact details of members to researchers or other groups.

3. WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

This policy applies to ANZCA Fellows and Trainees, including Trainees who wish to conduct survey research in order to fulfil ANZCA's training program requirements.

4. WHO DOES THIS POLICY NOT APPLY TO?

This policy does not apply to the following activities:

- Satisfaction surveys at meetings, seminars and conferences.
- Satisfaction surveys of ANZCA staff.
- Satisfaction surveys of ANZCA Fellows and Trainees.
- Qualitative research involving research activities such as focus groups, interviews, surveys with mostly open-ended questions or with small sample sizes.
- Any survey that is exempted by Council such as a workforce or curriculum survey.
- A survey that is sent to a special interest group (SIG) or regional/national committee (RC/NC) that is exempted from ANZCA Trials Group review by the SIG/RC/NC Chair (see Section 5.10)

5. BODY OF POLICY

5.1 The role of the ANZCA Trials Group

The primary aim of the ANZCA Trials Group is to support multicentre research trials. In addition, the Trials Group facilitates survey research for Fellows and Trainees. This process involves reviewing survey research applications, assessing the scientific validity of surveys, providing advice to researchers and protecting the privacy of ANZCA Fellows and Trainees.

Individual researchers are responsible for collecting and analysing survey data, unless the survey is part of a Trials Group-sponsored research project.

5.2 Privacy

ANZCA is committed to ensuring the privacy of individuals in accordance with:

- National Privacy Principles – Australian Privacy Act 1998, Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2001
- Information Privacy Principles – New Zealand Privacy Act 1993
- ANZCA Privacy Policy

The ANZCA privacy policy outlines how the College collects, uses and discloses personal information and the procedures that allow access to this information. The College cannot disclose personal information about its members. This includes email addresses and contact details for the purposes of research. The College can, however, facilitate survey distribution on behalf of a Fellow or trainee, in which personal information from the College database is only known to the Trials Group coordinator.

When using an electronic survey tool such as SurveyMonkey[®], researchers must choose the option to not collect IP addresses. This action must be clearly acknowledged in the application form, to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) or New Zealand Health and Disability Ethics Committee (NZ-HDEC) and in the invitation to participate that is issued with the email distribution to recipients.

5.3 Ethical oversight

Evidence of HREC or NZ-HDEC oversight of a survey is required before the Trials Group will facilitate distribution.

In most cases, where the survey is anonymous, voluntary and data is kept confidential, the research activity is considered “low risk”, and does not require full review by an HREC/NZ-HDEC. However, where a survey includes sensitive questions that may cause “harm” to a participant, for example a survey that examines the welfare of anaesthetists, the Trials Group may request that the survey undergoes a full HREC/NZ-HDEC review.

Ethical oversight must be sought from the appropriate body in each of the countries where the research activity will take place. The Trials Group will assist with this requirement.

5.4 Trainee research

The Trials Group encourages Trainees to undertake survey research during their training. Evidence of approval from an appropriate College-appointed supervisor must be provided.

5.5 Scientific rigour and publication

The Trials Group will not facilitate an unscientific or poorly constructed survey. It will not facilitate a survey where the aims of the research activity are unclear. Surveys must be of a publishable standard, and it is expected that the researcher will devote adequate time to investigating their area of interest and design a survey that is well thought out, clearly written and scientifically rigorous.

5.6 Sample size

The Trials Group does not send surveys to the entire fellowship, unless the researcher presents a strong case for why this is scientifically necessary. Instead, the survey will be distributed to a sample of Fellows, Trainees or both, carefully selected to optimise the response rate. The aim is to balance the need to obtain scientific valid data whilst avoiding sending excessive numbers of surveys to Fellows and Trainees.

5.7 Piloting the survey

Surveys must be piloted with colleagues, prior to submission to the Trials Group. If using an electronic survey method, you must include a working link to the survey in your application form.

5.8 The application and review process

Applicants are required to contact the Trials Group coordinator to discuss survey research ideas, complete a Survey Research Application Form and submit it to the Trials Group coordinator.

The Survey Research Application Form includes details of the application and review process.

Feedback to investigators is via the Trials Group coordinator, though in some instances it may be necessary to resolve issues via direct communication between the investigator and the reviewer.

The Trials Group will not facilitate a poorly constructed or unscientific survey that has prior formal project approval and/or HREC/NZ-HDEC approval.

Where a survey may ask sensitive questions that may cause “harm” or distress to a participant, for example a survey that examines the welfare of anaesthetists, the Trials Group may escalate the review process through the Research Committee chair to ANZCA Council. Council has the final discretion on whether the survey can proceed.

5.9 ANZCA website

The ANZCA website contains detailed information about survey research, including references and the survey research application form. Surveys that have been published or presented at scientific meetings will be listed at www.anzca.edu.au/fellows/Research/trials-group.html

5.10 Surveys within special interest groups (SIGs) and regional/national committees

Special interest groups (SIGs) were founded by ANZCA, the Australian Society of Anaesthetists and New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists to foster the continuing professional development of anaesthetists with sub-speciality interests. The three parent organisations have agreed that the process for approval of surveys will rest with the parent secretariat for the SIG. Therefore, the SIGs who have engaged ANZCA as their parent secretariat must undertake their research according to this policy. The executive of the SIG must ensure, in particular, that HREC/NZ-HDEC approval has been obtained. The Trials Group can assist where needed.

The Australian regional committees and New Zealand National Committee of ANZCA have access to email distribution lists for their own regions. Nevertheless, Fellows or Trainees wishing to conduct a survey in one region must still undertake their research according to this policy. The regional/national committee must ensure, in particular, that HREC/NZ-HDEC approval has been obtained. The Trials Group can assist where needed.

If the SIG or regional/national committee chooses not to seek Trials Group support, then the cover letter accompanying the survey must state that the survey has SIG executive or regional/national committee approval.

5.11 Costs

The College may levy fees for facilitating electronic or hard copy surveys on behalf of Fellows. Surveys that are trainee formal projects do not incur a fee.

5.12 Acknowledgement of ANZCA Trials Group

All surveys that are facilitated by the Trials Group and are published or presented at a conference or meeting must acknowledge the ANZCA Trials Group.

6. CONCERNS OR COMMENTS

If there are any concerns or comments in regard to this policy, please contact the ANZCA Trials Group trialsgroup@anzca.edu.au. Resolution of concerns will be sought as soon as possible.

7. CHANGES TO THIS POLICY

The College may modify or amend this policy at any time. Formal notice of amendments is not ordinarily given, but this policy is available via the College website, www.anzca.edu.au, or by contacting the College on +61 3 9510 6299.

8. REFERENCES

Jones D, Story D, Clavisi O, Jones R, Peyton P. Surveys: An introductory guide to survey research in anaesthesia. *Anaesthesia and Intensive Care* 2006; 34: 245-253.

Story D, Gin V, Na Ranong V, Poustie S, Jones D. Inconsistent survey reporting in anaesthesia journals. *Anesthesia and Analgesia* 2011; 113: 591-5.

Dillman DA, Smyth JD, Christian LM. Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys. 3rd ed. Wiley New Jersey, 2009.

ANZCA Bulletin. March 2009 pages 52-3.

9. CHANGE CONTROL REGISTER

Version	Author	Approved by	Approval Date	Sections Modified
1.0	ANZCA Trials Group	Council	February 25, 2012	Created
2.0	ANZCA Trials Group	Council	October 23, 2013	All, to match updated application form
2.1	ANZCA Trials Group	CEO	March 11, 2014	Copyright statement added

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