

Risk-based decision-making

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Anaesthetists, surgeons and clinicians involved in the care of surgical patients make risk-based decisions frequently. Most often, these decisions are based on subjective assessment rather than objective risk assessment tools. This talk will outline the benefits of consistent risk-based decision making for high and low risk patients.

Necessary features of a good risk tool will be discussed. Calibration and discrimination of risk tools will be explained and how these features affect accuracy and risk stratification (triage). No risk tool fulfils all the requirements needed by a clinician. Clinicians require an improved understanding of risk including desirable mortality and morbidity outcome, competing risks and risk of non-operative management.

Improved risk-based decision making will reduce clinical variation, be patient-centred, aid efficient use of healthcare resources and be transparent and equitable.