Society of Anaesthesiology evidence- and consensus-based guidelines on postoperative delirium

The purpose of the recently issued European Society of Anaesthesiology (ESA) guideline on postoperative delirium (POD) is to present evidence- and consensus-based recommendations for its prevention and treatment in children, adults and elderly. Considering the high impact of POD on patients’ health, safety and short, medium and long-term outcomes and the enormous burden caused to the health care system, this GL addresses several issues: screening and identification of patients at risk, adequate intraoperative care, postoperative detection of delirium and management of delirious patients. The ESA elected a Task Force and an Advisory Board, which agreed on several key questions. The GL follows the ‘Appraisal of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation (AGREE II)’ approach. A systematic literature search identified overall 405 articles (until March 2015). Relevant articles were graded according to their Level of Evidence (LoE) using the Critical Appraisal Worksheets from the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine of the University of Oxford. The Grade of Recommendation (GoR) was obtained based on the LoE of the literature and the consensus expert opinions by the majority (≥ 75%) of the Task Force and the Advisory Board. For all statements, the strength of the recommendation is prefaced by the GRADE phrase ‘we recommend’ for strong recommendations (GoR A) or by the GRADE phrase ‘we suggest’ for conditional recommendations (GoR B). The ESA-GL lists its recommendations separately for children, adults and for elderly (≥ 65 years of age). Separate sections encompass recommendations on risk factors for POD, on monitoring of POD, on prevention and on treatment. Two flowcharts illustrate the temporal and causal sequence of the evidence-based management in the peri-operative setting.