

## **Appendix 1. Definitions**

1. 'Adverse events' include anastomotic leak after open surgery, injury caused by fall in hospital, pulmonary embolus, secondary haemorrhage and inappropriate transfer.
2. 'Communication or poor documentation' represents issues of communication failures due to poor case notes or poor communication between physician and surgeon.
3. 'Complications after operation' include issues of aspiration pneumonia, general complications of treatment, reactionary bleeding after open surgery, and septicaemia.
4. 'Management or protocol issues' indicate errors relating to treatment guidelines or protocols, diagnosis-related complications, failure to use DVT prophylaxis, high dependency unit (HDU) not used postoperatively, patient-related factors and patient refusing treatment, surgeon too junior and unsatisfactory medical management.
5. 'Operation inappropriate' category includes both the decision to operate at all and the opinion that a different operation should have been performed.
6. 'Preoperative care issues' includes issues regarding computed tomography (CT) scanning which should have been done, cardiac monitoring inadequacy, failure to investigate or assess patient, failure to recognise severity of illness, and inappropriate treatment prior to surgical referral.
7. 'Postoperative care issues' indicates drug-related complication, fluid balance unsatisfactory, fluid overload and inadequate postoperative assessment.
8. 'Delay in definitive treatment' includes delays in transfer to surgery, delay to surgery, establishing diagnosis or starting treatment and delay in fully investigating patient.