

# Innovation

## SPOTLIGHT

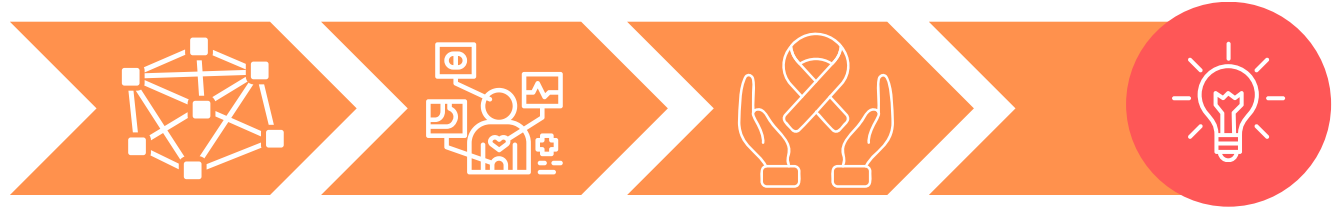


**DR. KAIE STROO, HEAD OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ANAESTHESIOLOGY AT  
TARTU UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL**

“*This new approach has made preoperative assessments much easier. Instead of spending time tracking down surgeons for individual consultations, we now have a structured process where concerns are discussed in a dedicated setting.*”

## THE TEAM AT TARTU UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Tartu University Hospital is the largest health care provider in Estonia. Our Department of Anaesthesiology is a large unit with 28 operating rooms. Patient safety is an important part of our daily work. However, as a large hospital, it's often challenging to stay informed about the ongoing safety initiatives across the departments. The SAFEST project has encouraged us to reflect on our safety practices across the entire hospital. Joining SAFEST has fostered systematic discussions on perioperative patient safety across departments.



## INNOVATION: WHAT'S NEW?

One of the key innovations that emerged from the SAFEST project at our hospital is the introduction of multidisciplinary team meetings for complex surgical oncology cases. Previously, preoperative risk assessments were largely the responsibility of anaesthesiologists, with critical decisions often made in isolation. When concerns arose, anaesthesiologists would individually consult surgeons by phone or email, leading to a time-consuming and fragmented process. The idea for regular multidisciplinary meetings emerged from discussions after the SAFEST self-assessment, where we realised the inefficiency of this approach. Now, these meetings bring together anaesthesiologists, surgeons, radiologists, and other specialists to discuss complex cases prior to surgery.

This innovation enhances coordination between specialties, ensures all critical perspectives are considered, and actively involves patients in the decision-making process. The exchange of questions between patients and medical teams ensures a shared understanding of risks and options, fostering better decision-making and greater confidence in the chosen treatment plan.

## MAKING IT WORK: STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Initially, we thought that implementing regular multidisciplinary meetings would be impossible due to time constraints. However, we learned that the oncology department already held regular multidisciplinary discussions with their patients, which provided a good starting point. Our anaesthesiologists began participating in these meetings, which allowed for the discussion of complex cases and surgical decisions. Over the past six months, these meetings have been held twice a month. Anaesthesiologists submit complex cases in advance, and discussions follow a structured format. As the head of the Department of Anaesthesiology, I attended the meetings in the beginning to see how it was going, but now the process runs smoothly and my involvement has become less frequent.

The approach has been so well received that it is now spreading to other departments. Cardiologists and urologists have expressed interest in adopting similar meetings for their patient groups.

## IMPACT

While we do not yet have quantifiable data, the early feedback has been very positive. Clinicians report enjoying these meetings and appreciate the enhanced communication and decision-making process.

Anaesthesiologists now have a better understanding of surgeons' perspectives, and vice versa, leading to more cohesive patient care. Additionally, anaesthesiologists have noted that their workload has become more manageable, with fewer time-consuming individual consultations with surgeons required.

The new structure allows complex cases to be flagged for discussion in a timely manner, streamlining the preoperative assessment process significantly. The collaborative model has sparked interest from other specialties, indicating its potential for wider implementation across our hospital.

# JOIN OUR EU-FUNDED PROJECT



Scan QR code to access the  
expression-of-interest form

OR

**CLICK HERE**

We are excited to invite hospitals across Europe and beyond to participate in our project to improve patient safety practices throughout the perioperative journey.

By joining this project, your hospital will:

- Engage in a comprehensive self-evaluation process to assess adherence to established patient safety standards during perioperative care.
- Gain valuable insights into areas of excellence and opportunities for improvement.
- Benchmark your hospital's performance against peer hospitals.
- Contribute to a broader effort to set new benchmarks for perioperative safety across healthcare systems.