

# CARA NEWS

Competence | Paraneural Space & Sciatic Block | Podcast of the Month

## Competence Assessment

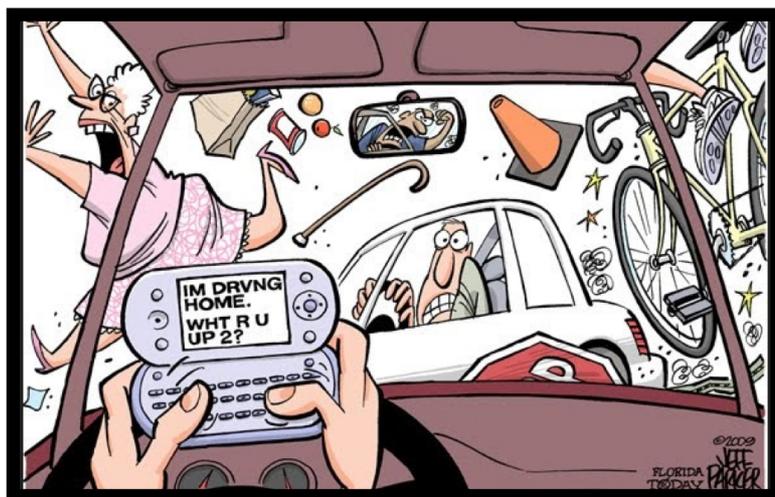
What is competence? Can competence be defined? If so can it be measured? Ahmed and colleagues at the ASSERT for Health Centre UCC and the Cork Academy of Regional Anaesthesia have asked these questions in the context of Ultrasound Guided Axillary Brachial Plexus Block...

## Sub-paraneural Space and Sciatic Block

Are all popliteal sciatic nerve blocks the same? Why when local anaesthetic is visibly in contact with the surface of the nerve, can blocks fail? What is the ideal location for local anaesthetic injectate during popliteal fossa block? The answer to these questions is based on the anatomy of the sciatic nerve's investing fascia...

## Podcast of the Month

BIS and neuromuscular blocking agents. Listening to this podcast, I nearly crashed my car...

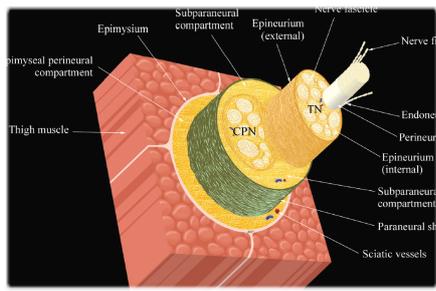


## Welcome

Welcome to the second issue of CARA News. In this newsletter we will bring you some items that we've found interesting from the world of regional anaesthesia, medical education and clinical research. This month we focus on the challenge of competence assessment. Let's step outside of anaesthesia for a moment and frame an example within the context of driving a motorcar. Have you ever had that uneasy feeling when sitting into a car driven by a newly qualified driver? What observed behaviours contributed to that uneasy feeling? Many of us can intuitively tell when a series of tasks is performed well. However subjectivity inherent to personal intuition limits the utility of this 'sixth sense' when it comes to high stakes assessment of clinical competence. Now imagine the context of ultrasound guided regional anaesthesia. What behaviours are observed in those who are expert? What errors to non-experts make?



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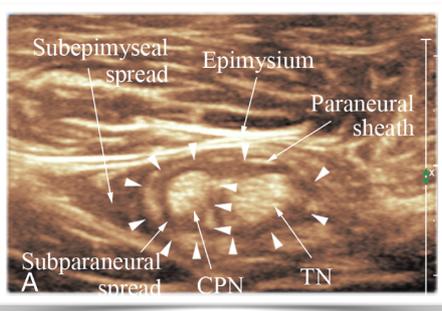


## Sub-paraneural space and Sciatic Block

... There are two distinct investing layers, the epimysium and the paraneural sheath. The sub paraneural space contains fat and connective tissue and forms the 'gliding apparatus' of the sciatic nerve. The epineurium of the tibial, common peroneal and sural nerves lie deep to the paraneural sheath.

Deposition of local anaesthetic deep to the paraneural sheath leads to fast onset, dense and long lasting sciatic block. Local anaesthetic can be visualised tracking both proximally and distally along the sciatic nerve.

Further reading: Reg Anesth Pain Med 2013;38: 375-7 and 447-451



Images from: Reg Anesth Pain Med 2013;38: 447-451

## Competence Assessment

The assessment of procedural competence is complex. It requires a valid tool based on careful and unambiguous characterisation of the reference procedure, definition of tasks and errors and establishment of acceptable performance standards. Ahmed et al report the end product of a series of studies to design and validate an assessment tool to evaluate performance during ultrasound guided axillary brachial plexus block. While the utility of this tool has yet to be established in a prospective learning study, this report heralds a paradigm shift toward proficiency based progression training in regional anaesthesia.

[https://anaesthesiaacademy.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Ahmed\\_et\\_al-2016-Anaesthesia.pdf](https://anaesthesiaacademy.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Ahmed_et_al-2016-Anaesthesia.pdf)

## Podcast of the month

Although not immediately related to regional anaesthesia, I thought I would share this BJA podcast with you on the effect of neuromuscular blocking agents on BIS numbers. I remember reading this article at the time and thinking 'How the hell did these guys get ethics approval for this study?' and 'who the in their right minds would volunteer to participate?' Having listened to it twice now, I'm convinced that this is essential listening and the manuscript essential reading for every anaesthetist. Enjoy and don't have any nightmares!

[http://www.oxfordjournals.org/podcasts/bja\\_podcast.xml](http://www.oxfordjournals.org/podcasts/bja_podcast.xml)

## Upcoming Events

**Children and Regional Anaesthesia**, February 26th 2016, ASSERT Centre, University College Cork. More on: [www.anaesthesiaacademy.ie](http://www.anaesthesiaacademy.ie)

**Cycling and CME**, March 27-31, Mallorca, Spain. To register <http://anaesthesiaacademy.ie/clubvelo>.



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