To Health and Sport Committee,
Scottish Parliament

Dear Health and Sport Committee,

Roundtable session on clinical governance in NHS Scotland (28 November 2017)

I watched this roundtable session after work on parliament tv: https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/health-and-sport-committee-november-28-2017

I thought that there were many excellent contributions and I commend the committee for facilitating such breadth of consideration.

I am aware of how much material you have to consider so I will keep these personal observations brief. I have three areas of thought but realise my voice is just a tiny part of the more important wider community. I write as I am a doctor who has worked in NHS Scotland for 25 years and who has championed ethical considerations.

1. I thought that the contributions from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman added important perspectives that come from outside the NHS organisation.

2. Like others, I have concerns about the lack of independence of Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) from the day-to-day workings of the Scottish Government. HIS is an organisation that is doing some important work and now has an overarching role in NHS Scotland. The methodology and culture HIS deploys has been adopted from Boston, USA and from a handful of influential opinion leaders. It is my view that it is important to question this new approach to science especially in its approach to complexity. My experience has been that the approach advocated by HIS, in its aim for simplicity, can ignore ethical considerations. An example that I have experienced is with informed consent for interventions relating to the care of our older generation.

3. This session was about clinical governance in NHS Scotland. Given this, in case anybody involved or watching may have assumed otherwise, the National Clinical Director for NHS Scotland is not medically qualified and is governed by the General Dental Council.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Peter J. Gordon