

# Surgeons' feud at hospital 'put patients at risk'

By Nicola Harley

ONE of the country's leading surgeons has been suspended after a report revealed patients' lives were put at risk as a result of a bitter feud at a leading teaching hospital.

An urgent review into standards at St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was called after tensions between the vascular and radiology departments reached breaking point. The two departments had been involved in a dispute over who should care for individual patients.

It has led to the suspension of Prof Matt Thompson, a consultant vascular surgeon who was clinical director for cardiovascular services at St George's, in Tooting, south London, on Tuesday.

The trust has been forced to call in a team from a neighbouring hospital to run its departments. The move came after an external review found "standards of behaviour" in the departments were "far below" what was expected.

A spokesman for St George's told *The*

*Daily Telegraph*: "The review is detailed and wide-ranging. We are deeply disappointed that the standards of behaviour described ... fall far below the high standards we expect of staff.

"We have asked a team from Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust to help us deliver vascular services for patients at St George's. They have begun assisting us this week."

Many vascular operations have become keyhole procedures performed by vascular surgeons and usually both sets of specialists work together deciding which patients each speciality should treat.

Prof Thompson was the clinical director for three London-wide configurations of cardiovascular disease, major trauma and emergency services. He also chaired the clinical reference group for vascular services.

He is Honorary Secretary of the British Society for Endovascular Therapy and is leading a review into the delivery of Cardiovascular Services London.