

Second Global Patient Safety Challenge: Safe Surgery Saves Lives



The WHO World Alliance for Patient Safety has initiated work on the second Global Patient Safety Challenge in January 2007. The programme, *Safe Surgery Saves Lives*, aims to improve the safety of surgical care around the world. By focusing attention on this as a public health issue, the WHO is recognizing surgery's growing importance for improving the safety of health care in all Member States.

The incidence of traumatic injuries and other surgical conditions is rising as a proportion of the total global burden of disease. Surgical care and its safe delivery can potentially affect the lives of millions of people worldwide. By defining a core set of minimum standards that can be applied universally across borders and settings, the second Patient Safety Challenge hopes to create an environment of safety that will help improve both access to and care of surgical patients.

The second Challenge will review the evidence for improving safety in surgery and will bring together experts and clinicians with experience in a broad range of health care settings. It is envisaged that a set of **basic practice standards** for the delivery of surgical services will arise from this work. The goal will be to improve surgical outcomes for patients regardless of circumstance or environment. By improving processes already in place in many operating theatres, safety can be enhanced and quality increased without demanding substantial financial investments in health infrastructure. The guiding principles for any recommendations are that standards must be simple, widely applicable, and measurable regardless of the operative setting.

The project is focusing on four thematic areas for evaluation and improvement:

- 1- Clean Surgery
- 2- Safe Anesthesia
- 3- Safe Surgical Teams
- 4- Measurement and Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Each of these themes will be examined closely and specific recommendations will be made to improve the safety of surgery. During its development, a programme will be established to monitor and evaluate the results of implementation and the effect that basic practice standards have on surgical care.