



**EUROPEAN WORKSHOP
SECOND GLOBAL PATIENT SAFETY CHALLENGE
"SAFE SURGERY SAVES LIVES"
15 JANUARY 2009**

EUROPEAN WORKSHOP

In January 2009, the World Health Organization's "Safe Surgery Saves Lives" initiative will hold a workshop to promote the implementation and dissemination of the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist and related tools within the Europe. The all-day event will take place at the British Library in London, United Kingdom, and will feature speakers from a range of European countries and health care professions, including Dr Atul Gawande (leader, "Safe Surgery Saves Lives"), Sir Liam Donaldson (Chair of the World Alliance for Patient Safety) and Lord Darzi who has led the piloting of the checklist in England.

The workshop will outline the importance of surgical safety and the background to this work. It will introduce the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist and safety tools that have been developed. Attendees, including professional organizations representing surgery, anaesthesia, nursing and theatre staff, patient groups and health providers, will hear about the lessons learned from the official pilot sites, including at Imperial College London, and other local hospitals which have implemented the checklist. The workshop will encourage the sharing of experiences from implementation of the Checklist and about the impact this has had on patient care and outcomes. There will also be presentations on the creation of surgical vital statistics globally.

There will be an opportunity for professional associations and other groups to endorse the initiative, and to join the 284 organizations from all over the world which have already done so.

THE PROBLEM

Surgical care has been an essential component of health care worldwide for a century, but its recent, rapid growth is now having major public health consequences. Annually, an estimated 234 million major operations are performed around the world—one for every 25 human beings on earth. There are almost twice as many operations done globally as child deliveries, and at far higher risk than child birth. Major complication rates are reported to range from 3-16%, and death rates from 0.2-10%, depending on the setting, translating to at least 7 million disabling complications and 1 million deaths each year. At least half of these are recognized to be avoidable, if basic standards of care were more consistently followed in developed countries as well as developing.

THE RESPONSE:

The Second Global Patient Safety Challenge, "Safe Surgery Saves Lives", launched by the World Health Organization in June 2008, provides strategies and tools for reducing the rising incidence of deaths and complications from surgery worldwide. This includes the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist and defining measures to better track surgical volume and mortality.

WHO aims to work with interested professional associations and Member States to have the Checklist in use in operating rooms in 2,500 hospitals by the end of 2009 and to establish simple standardized measures for evaluating surgery at a national level to track results and ensure informed public health policy development. The objective is to have at least one country in each WHO region reporting on these surgical measures by the end of 2009.