



**World Health
Organization**

Patient Safety

A World Alliance for Safer Health Care

African Partnerships for Patient Safety



Working for safer health care... together

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Foreword



African Partnerships for Patient Safety (APPS) is a new initiative that forms part of the World Health Organization's (WHO) response to the increasing political commitment and momentum for action on patient safety across Africa.

It is a bi-directional initiative working with identified hospitals in Africa and Europe which aims to establish sustainable partnerships focusing on patient safety and will be aligned with each country's individual health policy framework.

It is concerned with finding innovative solutions for patient safety problems in Africa and ensuring patient safety receives its rightful prominence within health care in the region with collaborative support, as partners, from identified hospitals in Europe.

Improvements to make care safer for patients take time and commitment, and I welcome the energy that the first wave of hospitals has demonstrated in accepting this challenge. The skills and expertise that each partner brings will enrich the body of knowledge for patient safety, not just for APPS, but for all WHO Member States.

Sir Liam Donaldson

Chair

WHO Patient Safety



Message from Professor Didier Pittet

Patient safety is a critical challenge in the African region and key priorities identified by African health professionals are driving this new patient safety programme. These priorities include the prevention of health care-associated infection, improvements in waste management, safe surgical care and medication safety.

The programme has already gathered momentum and as it moves forward and expands over the coming years, the vision of establishing partnerships between European hospitals and each of the 46 countries in WHO's African Region will become a reality. Each partnership commits to do its utmost to ensure

sustainability and to act as a national beacon for patient safety knowledge and practice.

In its first wave, APPS is working with six hospital partnerships across Africa and Europe to implement safer health care at the frontline. The passion and energy of these hospital teams are contributing to making safer health care a reality.

For organizations, hospitals and individuals involved in APPS, the message is simple: join together across continents to expand global expertise on patient safety. Together we can make all the difference.

Professor Didier Pittet

Expert Lead
WHO Patient Safety,
African Partnerships for Patient Safety

Introduction

With the growth of globalization and the 'inter-connectedness' of economic, social and cultural development, placing health in an international context is essential. The UK Government's strategy 'Health is Global' (2008) states, "...[it] embraces people across the world because health is determined by problems, issues and concerns that transcend national boundaries."¹

The drive by international leaders to work together to ensure their country's contribution to international health development is further articulated in a number of recent publications, most notably *The U.S. Commitment to Global Health: Recommendations for the Public and Private Sectors* (2009). With the focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals² by 2015, there is a real sense that the international community and global leaders need to strengthen global health frameworks and develop a humanitarian impetus to improve health indicators.

With many sectors influencing health and health-care delivery, and so many agencies in the field, "improving global health requires co-operative actions and solutions."³ African Partnerships for Patient Safety is an example of how such cooperative actions and a clear focus on evidence base and culturally and contextually appropriate solutions has the potential to improve the outcome of health care for millions of patients.

¹ HM Government (UK) 'Health is Global – A UK Government Strategy, 2008-13' (2008) page 14
² The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest. www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml
³ As above.





Background



Patient safety affects everyone in developed and developing countries, with no country yet solving all of its patient safety issues. As in other regions of the world, patient safety is receiving increasing attention in Africa. In 2005, the Kenyan Ministry of Health hosted an event that focused on the importance of patient safety in African countries and launched regional efforts to tackle the issue through WHO Patient Safety. The first joint WHO African Region /WHO Patient Safety Workshop was held in Kigali in December 2007. It focused on patient safety issues in the region and developed recommendations for national policies and strategies to improve the situation. Health care-associated infections (HAI) were at the forefront of discussions and were considered a priority for action in the African Region. HAI was identified as the most frequent adverse event in health care in Africa. In considering infection control constraints and minimum standards for infection control in the African Region at facility level, participants recommended specific measures, namely to:

- Improve hand hygiene compliance/practices
- Raise awareness/sensitize hospital administrators to the impact of poor hand hygiene
- Establish an Infection Control Committee in each African health-care facility
- Improve training and education on HAI and hand hygiene
- Establish monitoring and evaluation of HAI
- Ensure health-care worker protection from HAI.



“An ‘enabling environment’ is fundamental to any change”

Gondar obstetrician in APPS seminar

The Kigali Workshop also highlighted other relevant areas where action on patient safety is required at the individual, organizational and institutional level:

- Quantifying economic and other significant issues associated with health-care errors
- Strengthening health systems using patient safety as an entry point
- Working on patient safety where there are human resource constraints
- Developing effective patient safety policies, guidelines and tools
- Constructing patient engagement mechanisms cognizant of adult illiteracy
- Implementing injection and blood safety interventions
- Developing occupational health to protect health care workers from blood borne pathogens
- Developing waste management mechanisms
- Tackling unsafe surgical care
- Responding to inadequate patient safety data
- Achieving widespread sensitization to patient safety issues.

The commitment of African governments to patient safety, and in particular HAI prevention, was a prominent feature of the 58th WHO African Regional Committee Meeting held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in September 2008. A technical report outlining the major challenges in patient safety in the African Region⁴, including prevalence studies on hospital-wide health care-associated infection from some African countries, highlighted a serious burden of disease.

Twelve proposed actions in response to the patient safety challenges were identified in the report.

1. Develop and implement national policy for patient safety
2. Improve knowledge and learning in patient safety
3. Raise awareness among patients and health-care workers
4. Address the context in which health services and systems are developed
5. Minimize health care-associated infection
6. Protect health-care workers
7. Ensure health-care waste management
8. Ensure safe surgical care
9. Ensure appropriate use, quality and safety of medicines
10. Promote partnerships between patients, family members, health professionals and policy-makers
11. Provide adequate funding
12. Strengthen surveillance and capacity for research.

At a special ministerial signing ceremony, WHO African Member States signed a pledge outlining their intention to take action to address health care-associated infection.

4 Patient Safety in African Health Services: Issues and Solutions, Report of the Regional Director to the 58th Regional Committee, September 2008



African Partnerships for Patient Safety (APPS)

In 2008, in discussion with African countries, England and Switzerland, WHO Patient Safety initiated a new programme named African Partnerships for Patient Safety (APPS), as a pathway for developing safer patient care.

As part of this collaborative approach, alignment of programme planning and implementation with the WHO Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) in individual African countries is a priority. Ministries of health – integral to joint CCS development – are therefore natural partners throughout programme implementation.

The 12 action areas identified by the WHO African Region form the focus of all APPS activity and underpin the entire programme.

The initial focus of activity will be within hospitals, with hospitals in Africa partnering with hospitals in England and mainland Europe. However, hospitals will not be the sole focus of the partnership programme. In fact, primary health-care focused approaches to patient safety through health system strengthening is essential even when developing initiatives for hospitals, as highlighted in the 2008 World Health Report *Primary Health Care: Now More Than Ever*. APPS provides an opportunity to test the 'blending' of hospital-focused patient safety initiatives and wider community-based patient safety initiatives.

A framework has been established through the publication *Health is Global*, on which to build the English partners' contribution to APPS. There are ten principles underpinning the strategy and three in particular are relevant to the APPS programme.

- **Principle 2:** base our global health policies and practice on sound evidence, especially public health evidence, and work with others to develop evidence where it does not exist
- **Principle 8:** Learn from other countries' policies and experience in order to improve the health and well-being of the UK population and the way we deliver health care
- **Principle 10:** work in partnership with other governments, multilateral agencies, civil society and business in pursuit of our objectives⁵

The APPS Model - Key Questions

APPS provides a channel for the passion and enthusiasm of health-care workers who are committed to improving the safety of their patients while acknowledging the importance of influencing multiple levels of the health care system.

What is the APPS Vision?

One or more hospitals in each of the 46 countries of WHO's African Region, has a close and sustainable partnership with a hospital in Europe to create a network of beacon hospitals for patient safety.

These partnerships will foster two-way knowledge transfer and result in the development of a body of patient safety professionals, contributing to individual institutions acting as patient safety "amplification points" within each country.



“APPS
presents both a
challenge and
an opportunity”

Dr Gashaw Gessele Getahun
APPS focal point, Ethiopia

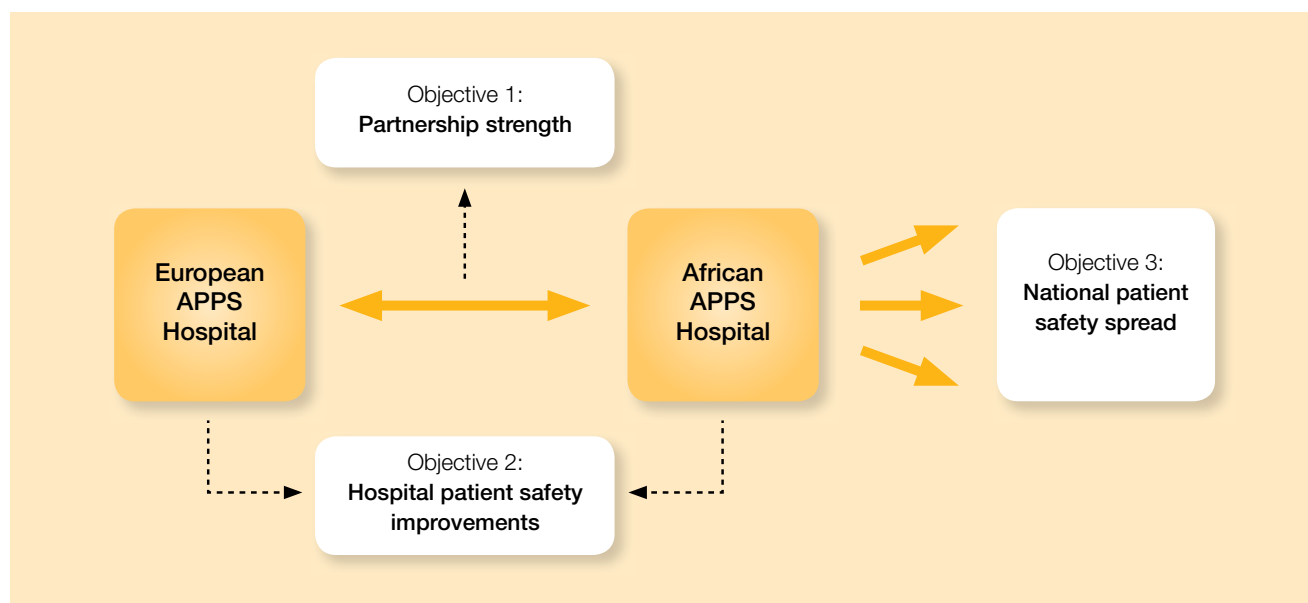


What are the core objectives of APPS?

There are three core aims, the outcomes of which will be the subject of monitoring and evaluation efforts:

1. To build and strengthen partnerships between hospitals in Africa and Europe, focusing on patient safety
2. To implement patient safety improvements in each partnership hospital
3. To facilitate the spread of patient safety improvements across each country.

Hospital patient safety improvements in each of the partnerships will initially focus on the prevention of health care-associated infection, starting with improved hand hygiene. This will be a common platform in all partnerships. Other areas of work will be developed by each partnership based on the 12 patient safety priority action areas endorsed by all countries of the African Region.



As the programme develops, the concepts and values of patient safety will be embedded into practice to improve patient safety and stop unnecessary patient harm and death.



What is a Patient Safety Beacon Hospital?

In the quest to nurture and develop hospitals in each of the partnerships to become beacons for patient safety improvement there will be a focus on:

- Each partnership developing a cadre of trained patient safety professionals, who will act as national and in some cases regional resources
- Developing close and effective relationships with government, academia and civil society on patient safety
- Putting in place mechanisms to ensure that each partnership acts as an “amplification point” for patient safety improvement
- Ensuring a two-way exchange of knowledge between African and European partners with all partners appreciating cultural differences
- Partnership work contributing to national and regional health priorities with a willingness to implement multiple patient safety initiatives
- Agreeing to undertake impact assessments and demonstrate significant quantifiable improvements in health outcomes.

What is a Patient Safety Amplification Point?

Over time, each beacon hospital will strengthen its capacity, systems and infrastructures for the achievement of enhanced patient safety through the implementation of improvement methods and techniques. These partner hospitals will play a key role in spreading exemplar patient safety systems within a country, thus amplifying the hospital-specific patient safety improvements.

The hospitals will work through existing (and in some cases new) networks to sensitize and advocate for patient safety improvement at every level of the system.

What does Partnership mean?

One of the key starting points for APPS is understanding the meaning of partnership, and its role in the development and spread of sustainable patient safety improvements both in Africa and Europe.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines partnership as ‘the state of being a partner’ - the partner being a person or organization who shares or takes part with another or others, in terms of risk sharing, business, profit and so on. It is usually business related.⁶ Collaboration in its positive context is more associated with joint working especially in a literary or artistic sense. Further definitions of collaboration refine the context as ‘joint intellectual effort’⁷ and partnership as ‘joint possession or interest, as an alliance’.⁸

From a review of the literature, several key themes emerge in understanding partnership, including interdependence, trust, mutuality, accountability and commitment. These key themes, along with the input and perspectives of the APPS network, have been the basis upon which a working definition of partnership has been developed for APPS.

An effective partnership can be defined as a collaborative relationship between two or more parties based on trust, equality and mutual understanding, for the achievement of a jointly agreed goal. Partnerships involve risks as well as benefits, making shared accountability critical.

⁶ Source: The Concise Oxford Dictionary

⁷ The Free Dictionary

⁸ Word Definition Dictionary

An introduction to WHO Patient Safety: A World Alliance for Safer Health Care



In May 2002 the WHO World Healthy Assembly passed Resolution 55.18 urging Member States to pay the closest possible attention to the problem of patient safety and to establish and strengthen science-based systems necessary for improving patient safety and the quality of health care. In 2004, WHO Patient Safety was established, chaired by Sir Liam Donaldson, Chief Medical Officer for England. The main office is based in Geneva at WHO headquarters with a satellite office in London. There are two WHO Patient Safety Collaborating Centres, one in Geneva, Switzerland, with an emphasis on infection control and one in Chicago, USA, with an emphasis on the development of international patient safety solutions.

WHO Patient Safety exists to facilitate the development of patient safety policy and practice in all WHO Member States. It is a powerful driver for improvement at the international level, focusing on five objectives:

1. Assessment and understanding of the various problems which exist within health care
2. Development of norms and standards
3. Improving knowledge access and use
4. Promotion of innovation and methods to ensure sustained commitment to the concept of safer health care
5. Strengthening capacity across all levels of the health system.

WHO Patient Safety has a number of programme areas, each working towards its overarching objectives:

1. The Global Patient Safety Challenges
 - i) Clean Care is Safer Care
 - ii) Safe Surgery Saves Lives
 - iii) Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance

2. Research for Patient Safety
3. Patients for Patient Safety
4. Solutions for Patient Safety
5. High 5s
6. Education for Safer Care
7. International Classification for Patient Safety
8. Technology for Patient Safety
9. Reporting and Learning for Patient Safety
10. Eliminating central line-associated bloodstream infections
11. The Safety Prize initiative
12. Knowledge Management.

First Global Patient Safety Challenge – Clean Care is Safer Care

The first Global Patient Safety Challenge, “Clean Care is Safer Care” is a flagship programme of WHO Patient Safety. The initiative works to catalyze commitment and action to reduce the global burden of health care-associated infections (HAI). To date over 120 countries have pledged support for the programme.

Second Global Patient Safety Challenge – Safe Surgery Saves Lives

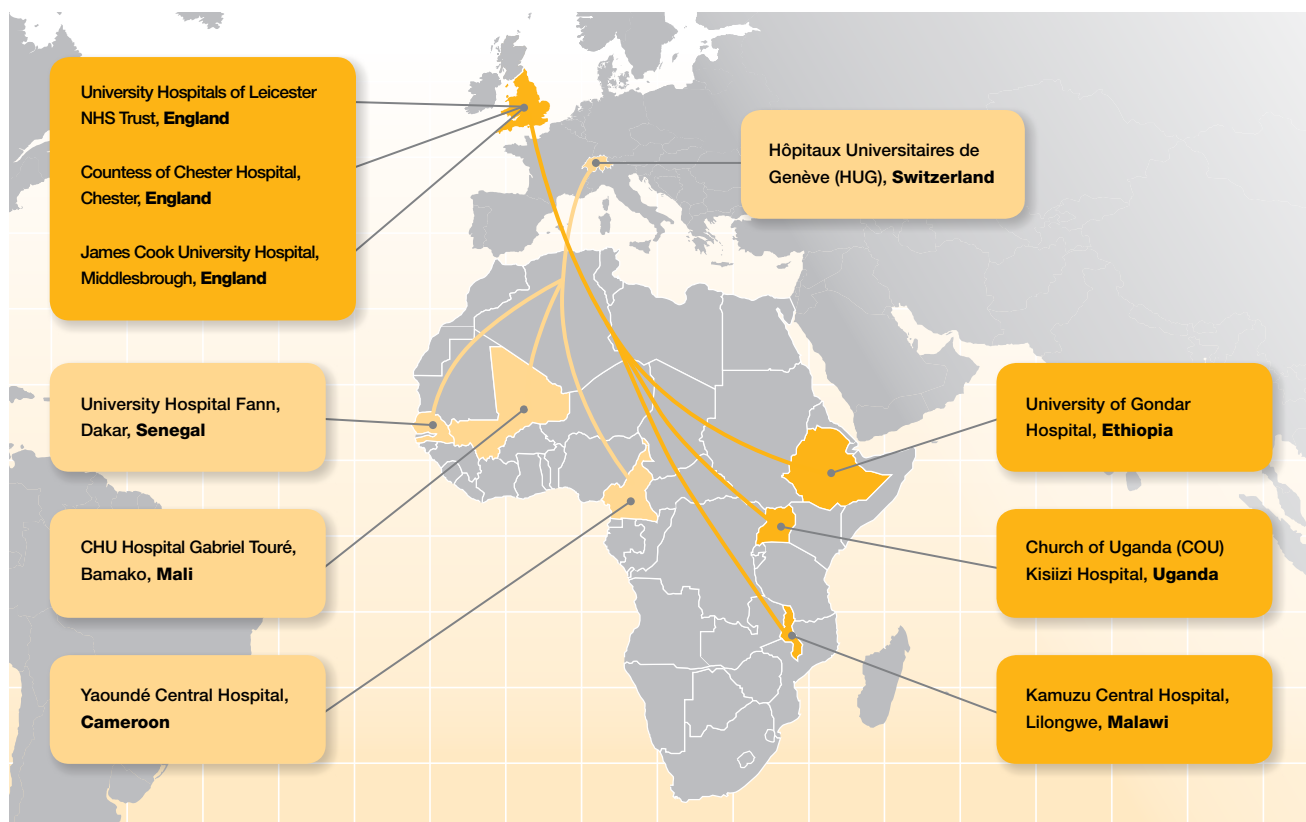
The goal of the Second Challenge is to improve patient safety around the world by ensuring adherence to proven standards of surgical care in all Member States. The **WHO Surgical Safety Checklist** has improved compliance with standards and decreased complications from surgery in eight pilot hospitals where it was evaluated. It is being rolled out in countries throughout the world. The checklist identifies three phases of an operation, each corresponding to a specific period in the normal flow of work. In each phase, the checklist helps teams confirm that the critical safety steps are completed before it proceeds to the next stage.



An introduction to the first-wave partnership hospitals:

The first wave of partnerships began in 2009 and involves six partnerships, three in Anglophone Africa, each partnering with a hospital in England, and three in francophone Africa,

partnering with the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG) in Switzerland. Each year, further partnerships will be established and join the programme.





Kisiizi, Uganda-Chester, England

Church of Uganda (COU) Kisiizi Hospital, Uganda, is partnering with the Countess of Chester Hospital, Chester, England.

Kisiizi Hospital is a 250 bed rural-based general hospital that serves a population of 300,000. It provides a wide range of services including primary health care. Three hundred staff are employed at the hospital including 7 doctors and 100 nurses. The hospital runs a series of successful community based initiatives including generating its own electricity by hydroelectric power.

The Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is a 600 bed, single site general hospital. The Trust has over 3,000 employees and provides acute, emergency and elective services, primary care direct access services and obstetric services to more than 425,000 patients a year primarily from Chester and surrounding rural areas in the north-west of England. The Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust was one of the first ten Foundation Trusts to be established in April 2004 as a public-benefit corporation independent of government control.



Gondar, Ethiopia-Leicester, England

University of Gondar Hospital, Ethiopia, is partnering with University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, England

University of Gondar Hospital is a 400 bed university hospital, which acts as the referral centre for four district hospitals in the area. It has a range of specialities including paediatrics, surgery, gynaecology, psychiatry, HIV care and an outpatients clinic. Within its 400 staff it employs 50 doctors, 150 nursing staff, three pharmacists, 90 care staff and 25 laboratory scientists. These staff serve a population of four million across the region. As a university hospital, it plays an important role in teaching medical and nursing students.

The University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust is one of the largest and busiest acute trusts in the country. The hospitals include the Glenfield Hospital, Leicester General Hospital and Leicester Royal Infirmary – incorporating Leicester Children's Hospital. They provide services to a diverse population of nearly one million people across Leicester and the English counties of Leicestershire and Rutland, as well as a further two to three million people in neighbouring counties. They have an annual budget of approximately £650 million and employ almost 12,000 staff. They have nationally and internationally renowned centres of excellence in cardiac, renal and cancer care, and are at the forefront of many research programmes and new surgical procedures. The Care Quality Commission recently announced that the cardiac unit at Glenfield Hospital is one of Britain's three top specialist centres for successful heart bypass operations.

Lilongwe, Malawi-Middlesbrough, England

Kamuzu Central Hospital, Lilongwe, Malawi, is partnering with James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough, England.

Kamuzu Central Hospital is a 780 bed tertiary level hospital which provides referral services for five district hospitals. The hospital provides ICU, internal medicine, gynaecology, paediatrics, general surgery and orthopaedic services and is also the only dialysis centre in the country. The population in the direct community numbers 620,000 but the hospital also serves the population across the wider region of around 4 million in total. The hospital has 59 doctors and 286 nursing staff.

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is the largest trust in the Tees Valley. The trust provides health care for over 400,000 people from two main sites, the James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough and the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton. The trust has a 7,000 strong workforce, which offers particular expertise in heart disease, trauma, neurosciences, renal services and spinal injuries. The organization also works in close partnership with a Ministry of Defence hospital unit based at the Friarage Hospital. The trust is also host site for the County Durham and Tees Valley Local Clinical Research Network and a host site for the North East Research Design Service, reaffirming the trust's commitment to training, life-long learning and research.



Bamako, Mali-HUG, Switzerland

CHU Hospital Gabriel Touré, Bamako, Mali, is partnering with the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG), Switzerland.

CHU Hospital Gabriel Touré, is a 367 bed, tertiary level teaching hospital which also acts as a national referral hospital. It employs 622 staff, including 114 doctors and 249 nurses, who provide a wide range of services including emergency, intensive care, surgery and outpatient services. It has an annual admissions rate of about 16,500 patients and serves 2 million patients in the direct community and 12 million in total across the wider region.

Dakar, Senegal-HUG, Switzerland

University Hospital Fann, Dakar, Senegal, is partnering with the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG), Switzerland.

University Hospital Fann is a 314 bed tertiary care teaching hospital and is a referral hospital for infectious diseases. Its services include neurosurgery, psychiatry, infectious diseases, emergency care, an outpatients clinic, radiology and cardiovascular and thoracic surgery. 692 staff, including 114 doctors and 361 nurses, serve the local population in Dakar that numbers around 1.5 million.

“African Partnerships for Patient Safety is concerned with optimizing the health of patients across the WHO African Region. It depends on the development of respectful, flexible and mutually beneficial partnerships, embracing the passion and commitment of all health-care workers in Africa and Europe to ensure success.”

Martin Fletcher, Chief Executive, National Patient Safety Agency, England and Wales

Yaoundé, Cameroon-HUG, Switzerland

Yaoundé Central Hospital, Cameroon, is partnering with the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG), Switzerland.

Yaounde Central Hospital is a 381 bed tertiary level general teaching hospital. The hospital employs nearly 800 staff including 95 doctors and nearly 270 nurses. The hospital provides surgical care, obstetrics, gynaecology and elderly care services along with radiology, intensive care, emergency services and an outpatient clinic to the population of the city and more widely across the country. The hospital is also a research and surveillance centre.

Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG) is a public, university hospital with 2200 beds, serving Geneva and its surrounding population (approximately 800,000). It employs almost 8,500 staff of whom 1,500 are medical doctors and other academics. One of the priorities of the hospital in its 2006-2010 Strategic Plan is to maintain the “spirit of Geneva”, by emphasizing Geneva’s role within Switzerland’s renown commitment to humanitarian work. The hospital has pioneered work on infection control and hand hygiene and been at the forefront of the most significant changes in hand hygiene practices, the systematic use of alcohol-based handrubs as the new standard of care as part of a multimodal strategy to improve hand hygiene in health care.





Our Partners

APPS is working closely with several key partners to support the development of a sustainable and effective partnership programme.

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), England

The NPSA is part of the English National Health Service. The Agency was established in 2001 with a mandate to identify patient safety issues and find appropriate solutions. It leads and contributes to safe patient care by informing, supporting and influencing organizations and people working in the health sector in England and Wales.

In 2004, the NPSA launched the first nationally coordinated campaign on hand hygiene improvement in health care, which is now in its fourth year of implementation. The cleanyourhands campaign has continued to emphasize the imperative of better hand hygiene to prevent the spread of infections. Independent evaluation to date suggests that the campaign is effective in raising awareness, increasing the use of alcohol handrub and reducing infection.

More broadly, the NPSA provides a repository of information and tools on patient safety which may be utilized in response to individual partnership needs as part of its contribution to APPS. It is responsible for the development and dissemination of critical patient safety alerts to hospitals in England and Wales.

Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG), Switzerland

The Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG) is a pioneer in the field of infection control under the leadership of Professor Didier Pittet. The systematic use of alcohol-based handrubs as part of a multimodal strategy to improve hand hygiene in health care has changed hand hygiene practices around the world. In September 2008, the hospital was designated a WHO Collaborating Centre for Patient Safety (Infection Control & Improving Practices) to monitor the delivery of the WHO First Global Patient Safety Challenge: Clean Care is Safer Care. The hospital is a significant partner in APPS using its expertise and knowledge to further advance safer patient care.

Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET)

THET is a UK based health charity committed to improving essential health services in developing countries. It promotes partnerships ('Links') between health institutions in the UK and their counterparts in developing countries, promoting action that is practical, sustainable and responsive. Health Links allow for the reciprocal transfer of skills and knowledge between developing countries and their counterparts in the UK. THET gathers and disseminates good practice, and supports Links to ensure work is demand driven and aligned with regional and national health plans.

THET provided APPS with technical assistance to identify effective functioning partnerships that can be built upon as part of its contribution to the programme.

More Information

Please visit: <http://www.who.int/patientsafety/implementation/apps/en/>
For enquiries please contact us at: apps@who.int

For further information on WHO Patient Safety's work on infection control and hand hygiene,
visit: <http://www.who.int/gpsc/en/>

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