



## Invited Commentary

A Commentary on “Ensuring safe surgical care across resource settings via surgical outcomes data & quality improvement initiatives” (Int J Surg 2019 Aug 5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijisu.2019.07.036>)



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Medical conditions requiring surgical interventions and the unmet needs for safe surgical care are increasing [1], and the situation is worse in poor countries [2]. A recent study on laparoscopic outcomes in six Caribbean countries by Eyob et al. [3] highlights the importance of safe surgical care. Surgical outcomes and the quality of surgical care in the Caribbean countries highlighted by Eyob et al. [3] is not very different from other low and middle income countries (LMICs). Several issues such as low investment in health care systems hamper safe surgical interventions and care, especially in low resource settings [4] such as LMICs where resources are decreasing to cope with the rising needs for safe surgery [5].

Since safe surgery can save lives [6], the study by Eyob et al. [3] stresses the quality improvement of surgical procedures and surgical care and the authors argue for developing surgical outcomes databases, which could help in tracking patient outcomes and resource use; thus, facilitating research and planning. More importantly, ubiquitous digital technologies offer important opportunities for linking health data from remote healthcare facilities to large urban health centres and data centres.

However, there are several challenges in developing databases on surgical outcomes, surgical care, and related issues. For example, some enthusiastic clinicians or health care managers may start and actively participate in the collection and compilation of data on surgical procedures, outcomes, and care but these initiatives are more likely to slow down and even stop functioning when their pioneers move to other places or retire, and when their colleagues do not cooperate, support and contribute to the initiatives.

Hence, there is a need for more concerted commitment and action on the part of all stakeholders at the local, national, regional and international levels. At the local level, putting in place mechanisms and

procedures and changing behaviours and attitudes are imperative to make these initiatives sustainable. At the national level, increased investment in healthcare is needed to meet the required surgical needs, especially in developing countries where economic losses are higher due to unsafe and unmet surgical care [2]. In addition, support of the international community, especially from international organisations such as the World Health Organisations is also important to ensure the long term success of safe surgery and safe surgical care initiatives in poor settings and countries.

**Provenance and peer review**

Invited Commentary, internally reviewed.

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