



PROGRAM IN GLOBAL SURGERY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Harvard Medical School

5th March 2019

The Demographic and Health Survey Review Committee,

As members of the global health community, we focus our collective effort on all activities that support the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We want to draw special attention to the urgent need for strengthening surgical, obstetric, and anesthesia care as means to strengthen PHC as a significant pillar contributing towards Universal Health Coverage and the attainment of SDG 3 and other health-related SDGs. We submit this letter of support for the inclusion of surgical indicators into the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).

The provision of quality, affordable, and safe surgical, obstetric, and anesthesia care is an overlooked public health concern that has been well described in key publications, including The *Lancet* Commission on Global Surgery (LCoGS). The imperative to respond to the unmet need of essential surgical care has been recognised at the global level through the World Health Assembly (WHA), regional level, and at the domestic levels through country policy efforts. Thus, there is a global consensus on the urgent need to improve surgical systems -- a health system reform approach that is both a cost-effective and feasible means to improve population-level health, given shifts in epidemiological patterns of disease and demography.

To date, the collection and reporting of the LCoGS indicators has been sparse, fragmented, and oftentimes, modelled. We recommend the inclusion of survey questions into DHS 8 that will help to determine surgical unmet need and support the calculation of the following LCoGS-recommended indicators:

- Protection against impoverishing expenditure for surgical, anesthetic and obstetric care
- Protection against catastrophic expenditure for surgical, anesthetic and obstetric care
- Mortality following cesarean section
- Surgical volume

In working collectively, together, we affirm the need for improved surgical care and the need to base such reform efforts on quality data pertaining to surgical systems. We endorse and support the inclusion of the above mentioned surgical indicators into the DHS 8 and encourage your support for this important public health imperative.

Sincerely,

Emmanuel A. Ameh

Co-Chair, NSOAP Committee, FMOH, Abuja, Nigeria

President, Association of Surgeons of Nigeria

Division of Paediatric Surgery, Department of Surgery, National Hospital, Abuja, Nigeria

9 March 2019

Yours sincerely,

John G. Meara MD, DMD, FACS, MBA

Kletjian Professor of Global Surgery

Director, Program in Global Surgery and Social Change Harvard Medical School



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15th March 2019

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Sincerely,

Associate Professor Lars Hagander, MD, MPH, PhD
Director, WHO Collaborating Centre on Surgery and Public Health
Lund University, Sweden

Dr. Hampus Holmer, MD, PhD
Co-director, WHO Collaborating Centre on Surgery and Public Health
Lund University, Sweden



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Sincerely,

Martin Veller,
Dean Faculty of Health Sciences,
University of the Witwatersrand



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Sincerely,

Margaret E. Kruk MD, MPH
Associate Professor of Global Health
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

March 14, 2019

Date

Yours sincerely,



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John G. Meara MD, DMD, FACS, MBA

Kletjian Professor of Global Surgery

Director, Program in Global Surgery and Social Change

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Sincerely,

Chris Lavy, University of Oxford, 15th March 2019

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Sincerely,

Mr. Andrew JM Leather MBBS FRCS (Engl) FRCSEd (ad hom) MS
Senior Lecturer in Global Health and Surgery,
Director of King's Centre for Global Health and Health Partnerships,
School of Population Health and Environmental Sciences,
Faculty of Life Sciences and Medicine,
King's College London
13th March 2019



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