

Unmet need for surgical care, and surgical volume, are both fundamental elements of health system performance. Including these two indicators in the DHS would empower health systems to collect and track data that will enable health system strengthening and development, especially in low- and middle-income countries. I fully support the inclusion of these indicators in the DHS.

PGSSC wrote on Mon, 04 March 2019 16:42 Thank you for reviewing our proposal for new indicators within the Demographic and Household Survey (DHS) regarding emergency and essential surgical care. The collection of these indicators is a critical step towards the delivery of safe, affordable, equitable access to surgical services as a component of universal health coverage and we consider the DHS as the best forum to derive these data points.

The questions we propose are a product of the Lancet Commission on Global Surgery (LCoGS), a body of work spanning three years involving 25 commissioners and a diverse group of academic, governmental and civil society collaborators from 110 countries. Of the six indicators proposed by the LCoGS, four were published in the World Development Indicators by the World Bank and all six are included in the World Health Organization's Global Reference List of 100 Core Health Indicators. Nevertheless, there currently are no mechanisms in place to collect the data required for these indicators, creating a critical gap in knowledge for surgical care strengthening.

The new indicators in this proposal span four existing DHS modules. For clarity, they are listed in the table below. Of particular interest are the questions on out-of-pocket expenditure and household expenditure to enable the calculation of financial risk protection for all medical interventions captured by the DHS (both surgical and medical), a core component of Sustainable Development Goal 3.8. The remaining questions were taken from a successful pilot DHS survey in Zambia. In the development of this application, we have been fortunate to count on a number of international partners to provide expert review and the indicators proposed are a culmination of these consensus building discussions. Please refer to Appendix A for a full list of international stakeholders who support this application.

Proposed Indicators:

1. Surgical Unmet need
2. Surgical volume

Data Utility:

1. Inform and guide national surgical planning
2. World Bank: World Development Indicators