

Prepared by: Olive Fast, Christina Fast, Thomas Weiser, Jared Forrester

Title

Operational Training and Learning in Ethiopia supports improved WASH and Safe Surgery

The rigger

In 2015 the World Health Assembly passed a resolution calling for strengthening essential surgical care, including infection prevention and control standards to improve surgical safety [1]. This gave the impetus for the Sterile Processing Education Charitable Trust (SPECT) in 2017-18 to implement a training course in Ethiopia. This aimed to break the chain of infection by ensuring health care workers knew how to and had the resources required for proper cleaning and sterilization of surgical instruments. Thus, enhancing the hygiene aspect of WASH in health care.

What happened

SPECT provided sterile processing training to selected staff from 42 hospitals in Tigray and Amhara regions as part of the Safe Surgery 2020 initiative, and in four hospitals in Addis Ababa in conjunction with Lifebox®. Topics included microbiology, infection prevention, cleaning, instrument assembly and packaging, sterilization, sterile storage and transport. The availability of soap and water and appropriate brushes was also addressed.

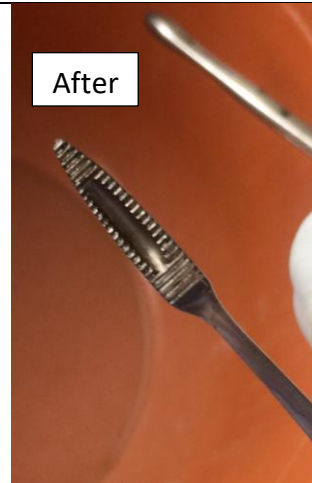
The ministry of health, supported by the Safe Surgery 2020 initiative and funded by the GE Foundation were instrumental in the project. SPECT and Lifebox were implementation partners in this program.

Findings from the project

SPECT trained 117 staff who have since taught others, resulting in over 300 staff newly trained in safe sterilizing processes. The biggest difference was noted in the cleanliness of the instruments post training – the answer to the question “where did we get all the new instruments?” was, “we didn’t get new instruments, we just learned how to clean them properly!”

Removal of 0.5% chlorine solution from practices (as instruments were being soaked) was achieved as WHO guidelines advise against this practice [2].

The impact of proper instrument cleaning: before and after pictures



References

1. Strengthening emergency and essential surgical care and anesthesia as a component of universal health coverage. Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly - Agenda item 17.1. Available from http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA68/A68_R15-en.pdf?ua=1
2. World Health Organization and Pan American Health Organization. Decontamination and reprocessing of medical devices for health-care facilities. WHO Document Production Services, Geneva, Switzerland. 2016. p.45 <https://www.who.int/infection-prevention/publications/decontamination/en/>

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