



A Situational Analysis of Surgical Care Capacity in Vanuatu

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Abstract text

Background: Worldwide, 5 billion people lack access to safe, timely, and affordable surgical care; nine out of ten of them live in low- and middle-income countries. In 2015, the Lancet Commission on Global Surgery (LCoGS) recommended the development of National Surgical, Obstetric, and Anaesthesia Plans (NSOAPs) as a comprehensive and coordinated road-map towards surgical system strengthening. Vanuatu as well as other Pacific island countries do face unique challenges in providing surgical care. This study assessed the surgical care capacity in our health facilities around the country to inform the development of National Surgical Obstetrics and Anesthesia Plan that is contextualized to our setting.

Methods: Mixed method cross-sectional observational study. A baseline situational analysis consisting of quantitative facility assessments of six main health facilities and qualitative key stakeholder interviews conducted to inform strategic health planning and policy making. This study used validated WHO-PGSSC facility assessment and stakeholder interview tools.

Results: There are 6 provincial hospitals, 2 of them are referral hospitals containing four functional theatres with a surgical volume of 863/100,000 population with in-hospital perioperative mortality rate < 1%. Significant proportion do not lie within the 2 hour access to any health facility providing at least 3 bellwether procedures. Vila central hospital is the only facility that is capable to provide 3 Bellwether procedures. Surgical Anesthesia Obstetrics specialist density is 5.35 / 100,000 which is below recommended 20 / 100,000 by LCoGS. The average Out of Pocket Expenditure for Bellwether procedures is less than 24,000 vt. Bulk of Out of Pocket expenditure is for transport and Lodging.

Discussion: Bulk of Surgical procedures are done in the referral hospitals with common challenges faced in 3 other provinces around service deliveries, system inputs and processes that needs to be strengthened to ensure surgical services are timely available, accessible, affordable to our population in our provinces.