



# SQHN Publication

## Patient Safety



Over 40% of patients are harmed in the health care setting. This means 4 out of 10 patients experience some sort of harm [1]. Annually, about 134 million adverse events take place in hospitals in low and middle income countries (LMIC), which leads to 2.6 million deaths per year, and errors in medications cost about \$42 billion yearly [1]. This menace can be attributed to unsafe health care practices.

A retrospective international study, conducted in Australia, USA, United Kingdom and Europe, reviewed the records of health care induced harm. The results which depicted the extent of patient harm from healthcare confirmed the high numbers of patients involved with an adverse event rate of 13.6%, 4.13%, 11.7% and 9.0% in Australia, USA, United Kingdom and Europe respectively [2]. Hence, Patient Safety is an issue of global public health concern that needs to be curbed.

### What is Patient Safety?

Achieving Universal Health Coverage would be futile unless the role of patient safety is integrated into health care[3]. Across the world, Patient harm, unsafe medication practices, and medication errors are the causes of disease burden, the principal cause of injury and preventable harm in health care systems [3].





The Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebrevsus, at the 6th Annual World Patient Safety, Science and Technology summit in February 2018 laid emphasis on the vital role of patient safety in attaining Universal Health Coverage [3].

Professor Isaac Adewole, the Former Minister of Health Nigeria, defined Patient safety as the reduction of avoidable harm and risks associated with the health care process to an adequate minimum[1,5].

### **The relevance of patient safety in health care**

A substantial number of patients are harmed from their health care centre or hospital which results to increased length of stay in hospitals, permanent injury and death. These incidents occur not only because of the lack of skill and knowledge of health care providers, but also, because the health system is rather multifaceted and patient treatment and outcome depends on a variety of factors. Numerous Health care providers (such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and others) also find it hard to ensure safe care because the system of care is not designed efficiently and effectively. [4]



Patient safety is an issue for all countries that deliver health services. Patients are harmed when they are given drugs that are not required, or they are given multiple drugs without being mindful of the possibility of adverse drug reaction. As well as poor communication, delay of treatment and follow-up of patients [4].

Patient safety does not require financial resources; however, it involves the commitment of the health workers and providers to engage in safe practices. Improved patient safety can be achieved by checking and reviewing procedures, connecting with patients and their families, learning from mistakes and discussing viably with the health care team. Errors are accounted for and analysed to help recognize the fundamental contributing factors. The factors that lead to errors need to be identified and understood in order to prevent reoccurrences [4].

### **Key issues in patient safety in Nigeria include;**

- Eliminating medication mistakes,
- Eliminating diagnostic mistakes,
- Improving workplace security,
- Sanitization issues,



- Proper supervision of patients and poor follow up [5].



### Are adverse events preventable?

Yes they are! Let us look at the patient outcomes of two studies. Laep et al. 1993 reported 28% of the events were due to negligence by the health provider. Subsequently, it was concluded that poor management and substandard care were the

reasons patients were harmed [6]. On the other hand, Bates et al. 1995, reported a rate of 6.5% of events were due to error in drug ordering and administration stage [7]. However, healthcare drug delivery processes needs to be reviewed, and prevention strategies need to be developed [2]. The two studies were carried out by Laep et al. and Bates et al. 1995 depicted that most patient adverse events are preventable [2].

Patient safety is the foundation of quality healthcare services. It is important in order to prevent deaths, disability and loss of resources. Health care providers need to upgrade their staff through trainings and examinations, review their medical processes, learn from previous mistakes, improve patient involvement and follow-up, are all essential to guarantee sustainable and noteworthy improvements in the safety.





## **Role of Society for Quality in Healthcare (SQHN) in establishing a culture of patient safety in Nigeria**

SQHN was incorporated in May 2006 as a not-for-profit organization to facilitate the understanding and acceptance of Quality in Healthcare in Nigeria as a catalyst for improved patient outcomes and reduction in healthcare delivery costs.

The society was established as a platform to share best practices in patient safety and healthcare quality. Her mission is “to lead, advocate and facilitate the continuous improvement of quality and safety in healthcare in Nigeria through Education, Collaboration, Training & accreditation”. SQHN is a registered corporate member of the International Society for Quality in Healthcare (ISQUA).

We have members in most states and all regions of Nigeria. We operate from our national secretariat in Lagos and have regional chapters in Abuja and Port Harcourt. We expect to launch Warri and Gombe chapters in the next few weeks.

Our key activities include:

1. Training and certification of healthcare professionals with about 500 individuals trained and 300 individuals certified between 2015 and 2018. About 500 individuals also attended our annual international quality conference between the same period.
2. Provision of technical support to hospitals and clinics with over 50 assessments and quality improvement plans supported/achieved between 2015 and 2018.
3. Development of comprehensive healthcare facility quality accreditation standards



## References

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