

# DRC Surgical Site Infection Working Group

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Terms of Reference

## *DRC Surgical Site Infection Reduction Working Group*

### **Member Brief and Terms of Reference**

#### **Summary**

Kings Kongo Central Partnerships (KKCP) has worked in partnership with the Kongo Central Province, southwest of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ministry of Health since 2015 with a focus on health systems strengthening to improve the quality of care, particularly surgical care. The second phase of our safe surgery programme of work will have a specific focus on reducing surgical site infections (SSI).

We are looking to create multidisciplinary working group of experts to:

- Summarise the current evidence base on reducing SSI in low resource settings.
- Provide technical advice on programme activities and strategy.
- Develop context appropriate tools for evaluating programme interventions.
- Advise on initiatives to support good antimicrobial stewardship and reduce antimicrobial resistance.

This is an exciting opportunity for clinicians with experience in surgical care and infection and an interest in global health to work on a developing project in the DRC.

#### **King's Global Health Partnerships**

King's Global Health Partnerships (KGHP) works with health facilities, academic institutions, and governments to strengthen health systems and improve the quality of care in four countries: Somaliland, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia. We bring together health, academic and international development expertise from King's College London, the UK's National Health Service (NHS) and our international partners to:

- Educate, train and support healthcare workers
- Strengthen healthcare and training institutions
- Enhance national health policies and systems

Our programmes are delivered by volunteers, with educators, researchers, health professionals, managers and health sector leaders taking up volunteering placements to deliver technical advice, teaching, training, and distance mentoring and on the job support to their counterparts in the global south.

#### **King's Kongo Central Partnership**

KGHP has been working in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to help strengthen the health system and improve the quality of care since 2015. We work in the Kongo Central province, in the southwest of the country where there is a high burden of trauma due to road traffic collisions on the arterial route connecting the Atlantic port cities of Boma and Matadi with the capital Kinshasa. We work with our partners to provide education and training of healthcare workers, and to strengthen the trauma system, clinical services, policy and research. Key partners include the provincial Ministry of Health and Education, the Hôpital Provincial de Référence de Kinkanda (Matadi) and the Université Joseph Vubu (Boma). These institutions provide services for a population of 6 million.

## Context

Surgery is an integral component of a functioning healthcare system. In Kongo Central province, most of the population lacks access to safe, timely and affordable surgery. For patients who are able to access surgical care, peri-operative mortality and complications are high and outcomes are poor. The barriers to accessing safe surgery in Kongo Central include: the risk of financial hardship for patients, the lack of a trained healthcare workforce, poor infrastructure and equipment, weak strategic leadership and limited use of data to improve health service delivery. The four main tertiary hospitals in the province employ experienced surgical staff, but there is only one full time post-graduate trained surgeon for the province and no specialist nurse surgical training. Most staff working in the operating room are self-taught and have not received formal training in peri-operative practice.

During the first phase of the Safe Surgery project, we developed robust data on surgery and emergency care, integrated the use of the WHO Safe Surgery Checklist into routine practice, and improved staff skills and knowledge. It is essential that we maintain the momentum of this project, bring about policy change at a national level, and address areas where gaps remain. To meet these needs, the second phase of the project has been designed, in collaboration with local partners and stakeholders with a focus on reducing surgical site infection rates, to impact the healthcare system at three levels. In partnership with the ministry of health, division of health and health care institutions, this project will tackle barriers to safe surgery at multiple levels of the health system. At systems level, it will work with the Provincial Health Division to increase capacity for leadership, strategic planning and management of surgical data. At institutional level, we will work to improve infrastructure and equipment. At an individual level, we will work to improve the knowledge, skills and confidence of health workers in safe surgery.

## Aim and objectives

### Aims

The main aim of the DRC SSI reduction working group is to support the safe surgery programme of work in Kongo Central.

### Objectives

The objectives of this work are as follows:

1. Provide expert input and analysis on plans and activities as they develop.
2. Review and synthesize relevant evidence.
3. Ensure evidence-based implementation of activities.
4. Support concrete activities (such as training courses) when they arise.
5. Support the development of funding proposals for additional work where necessary.

## Proposed activities

1. Provide a summary of current relevant evidence on reducing SSI in low resource settings.
2. Review current proposed activities and provide advice on their effectiveness.
3. Monthly meetings to review programme progress and ensure impact.
4. Support the delivery of context appropriate training resources.
5. Provide technical advice on infrastructure and equipment work.
6. Provide technical advice on the development of new SOPs.
7. Develop context appropriate training resources.

## Timing

**Application deadline:** Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November but we will review applications on a rolling basis due to the timeline and needs of the project, so we encourage you to apply earlier.

**Start date:** As soon as possible.

**Commitment duration:** We are looking for a minimum commitment of 3 months but would prefer engagement for the whole project (to November 2026).

**Location:** Our team is based in London and the DRC. Working group members will support the programme in the DRC remotely from the UK.

## Skills and experience

**Qualifications:** Clinicians, including doctors (ID, microbiology, surgeon), nurses (nursing, IPC) or allied health professionals.

### Experience:

- **Essential** - Experience working relevant clinical field and in global health
- **Desirable** - Experience working in low-resource settings and knowledge of strengthening health systems. Research experience with relevant publications.

**Personal Characteristics:** Reliable, hardworking, enthusiastic and solution focussed. You will need to believe in the value of partnership working and be able to demonstrate this through your work. You will have strong interpersonal skills and experience working in a multi-cultural team.

### Language:

- **Essential** – working proficiency in English
- **Desirable** – working proficiency in French

## Expectations

- You will work together as a team to deliver the proposed objectives but will be individually responsible for activity delivery.
- We anticipate this work to be approximately half a day a week on average but this will be flexible.
- We anticipate regular meetings with the project implementation team to troubleshoot and check progress as well as guide activities.

## Our offer to you

You will have the opportunity to work as part of a dynamic team and contribute to improving health outcomes for a population in need. In addition, there is strong evidence that health partnerships like ours do not only benefit people in low-resource settings. They also bring real benefit to NHS staff and services as well as citizens in our partner countries. Among others, these benefits include the opportunity to develop:

- Leadership skills
- Skills in interdisciplinary team working
- Knowledge and skills in innovation and quality improvement
- Clinical and teaching experience
- Cross-cultural experience
- Personal resilience and efficiency

## Application

All roles are appointed following an application and interview process, scheduled for a few days after the application deadline. If you are interested in applying, please send your CV and cover letter to [kghp@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:kghp@kcl.ac.uk), referencing “DRC SSI Working Group Application.”

The deadline for applications is 23:59 on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024, although we will be reviewing applications on a rolling basis due to the timings and requirements of the programme, so we encourage you to apply earlier. Thank you for your interest in King's Global Health Partnerships.

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