



G7 Meeting on Patient Safety

Organised by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Co-sponsored by the World Health Organization

Patient Safety: From Vision to Reality

Monday 22 November 2021, 13:00-16:00 hours (GMT, UK)

Context

Patient safety is a critical global public health issue and is essential if health systems are to advance and achieve universal health coverage (UHC). Every year, an inadmissible number of patients are harmed or die because of unsafe and poor-quality healthcare, exerting a very high global burden, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). With the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, patient safety has become an even more crucial area for international cooperation. The scale and challenge of advancing patient safety worldwide requires coordinated global action, sharing of best practices, improved public awareness and patient engagement. Even before the pandemic, 1 in 10 patients in high-income countries were harmed from safety lapses during their hospital care. This number is greater in LMICs where adverse events in healthcare contribute to around 2.6 million hospital deaths each year.

A lack of focus on patient safety results in significant economic cost to all countries. Approximately 15 per cent of total hospital expenditure and activity in industrialised countries is a direct result of treating safety failures, with the broader social and economic costs of patient harm amounting to trillions of USD each year. It also erodes public trust in a health care system, preventing patients from seeking often crucial medical care, and endangering the sustainability of health systems. Although health systems differ from country to country, many threats to patient safety have similar causes and similar solutions. Significantly, most safety failures and patient harm events can be avoided with simple and effective mitigation strategies, with the cost of prevention typically much lower than the cost of harm. Without addressing the safety of patients and health workers, reopening our societies, growing our economies and improving the resilience of healthcare systems worldwide will be more challenging than ever. Upfront investment in patient safety, including by ensuring an adequate and skilled workforce, provides an excellent return on investment as evidenced by a number of economic impact studies.

Patient Safety has a high priority in the UK because, as with all countries, the safety of our patients and health workers means that we can safeguard our societies and economies now and for years to come. UK is also recognised as a world-leader for having renewed the global focus on patient safety through our engagement with key patient safety allies, particularly the governments of Germany, Japan, Kenya, Saudi Arabia and Switzerland, and the World Health Organization (WHO). Since 2016, the UK has (i) co-established with Germany annual *Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety*, (ii) co-established with WHO a *Global Patient Safety Collaborative* to support patient safety improvement in low- and middle-income countries, and (iii) co-led with Kenya on the Resolution adopted by the 72nd World Health

Assembly (WHA) in 2019 entitled *Global Action on Patient Safety* (which established an annual World Patient Safety Day on 17th September). This global momentum led to the adoption of the *Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030* by the 74th World Health Assembly. The action plan will now steer all countries towards concrete actions that they can take in order to implement the Resolution, thereby improving patient safety at policy and practice levels.

Successful Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety and the G20 Presidency of Saudi Arabia in 2020 have enshrined patient safety as a global health priority. Although healthcare systems have made great strides over the last two decades to bridge the patient safety knowledge gap, there needs to be concerted action at global, regional and national levels in order to advance patient safety implementation. **UK is convening this high-level event with key G7 representatives and our other partners to demonstrate the continued importance of patient safety as a global endeavour, facilitate international collaboration, and support strategic initiatives designed to eliminate avoidable harm in healthcare globally.**

Objectives

1. **To illustrate the scale and significant burden of avoidable harm in healthcare globally** and its considerable impact on patients, families, health workers, health system finances, communities and societies.
2. **To demonstrate the need to:**
 - (i) Recognise patient safety as a global health priority of the highest order;
 - (ii) Provide high-level advocacy to create a vision for eliminating avoidable harm in health care, increase the profile of, and enhance, patient safety as a worldwide endeavour, facilitate international collaboration, and support strategic patient safety initiatives, such as the *Global Patient Safety Collaborative*;
 - (iii) Advocate for all countries to designate patient safety officers responsible for the coordination of patient safety implementation at national and facility levels.

Expected Outcomes

1. **Greater recognition of the significant impact of avoidable harm in health care globally** and recognition of patient safety as a key strategic priority in strengthening health systems and achieving UHC.
2. **Continued recognition of the need for international collaboration and resources invested for sustainable action on patient safety worldwide**, aligned with the WHA Resolution on *Global Action on Patient Safety* and WHA Decision on the '*Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030*'.
3. **Prioritisation of patient safety implementation** at national and facility levels across all countries to minimise avoidable harm in health care.

Chair & Keynote Speakers

1. **(Chair) Dr Aidan Fowler**, National Director of Patient Safety, NHS England & NHS Improvement, England, UK
2. **Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP**, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Department of Health and Social Care, England, UK
3. **Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP**, Chair of the Health and Social Care Committee, England, UK
4. **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**, Director General, World Health Organization, Switzerland

Further Information

Contact **Dr Shaleel Kesavan** (shaleel.kesavan@dhsc.gov.uk) at the Department of Health and Social Care, England, UK, and **Dr Neelam Dhingra** (dhingran@who.int) at the World Health Organization Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.