

Authors' Reply: Safe Surgery for All: Early Lessons from Implementing a National Government-Driven Surgical Plan in Ethiopia

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We appreciate the summary of anesthesia-related activities in Ethiopia and support the advocacy of anesthesia by Drs. Drum, Shimeles, Tilahun, and McQueen. Representatives of the Ethiopian Society of Anesthesiologists Professional Association (ESAPA) and the Ethiopian Association of Anesthetists (EAA) have been instrumental in the formation and implementation of the national Saving Lives through Safe Surgery (SaLTS) initiative. The SaLTS technical working group includes permanent members from both societies.

While we were unable to highlight all the accomplishments in the field of anesthesia in this article, we recognize that surgery is not possible without anesthesia. In Ethiopia,

as is often the case throughout much of East Africa, inadequate numbers of anesthesia providers are a major bottleneck to receiving surgical care [1, 2]. As the authors note, these workforce challenges often drive a lack of surgical provision [2, 3]. We are pleased to see the authors and their institutions take an active role in implementing the Ministry's National Anesthesia Roadmap.

Additionally, while we were unable to include all data obtained from Ethiopia's Hospital Assessment Tool in this article, questions about anesthesia-specific workforce, equipment, supplies, medicines, procedures, and infrastructure are included in the assessment tool. At each hospital, the anesthetist is surveyed for their part of the Hospital Assessment Tool. For example, the anesthesia provider is asked about functional anesthesia machines, pulse oximetry, spinal and regional anesthesia availability, and medications for sedation, paralysis, anesthesia, and analgesia. Members of both anesthesia associations are valuable contributors to Safe Surgery 2020's and SaLTS's current monitoring and evaluation programs.

Given the call for more collaboration, a new movement in Ethiopia deserves special mention. A national professional association dedicated to improving surgical and anesthesia care has emerged in the past few months. This consortium of professional societies for surgery in Ethiopia, including ESAPA and the Ethiopian Association of Anesthetists, will be a powerful force for cooperation to advance the agenda on safe surgical and anesthetic care in the country in a multi-disciplinary way.

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