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Patient Safety
5th Global Ministerial Summit 2023
23 - 24.02.2023, Montreux, Switzerland

Core Messages from Experts to Ministers
«5th Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety», Montreux, Switzerland, 24 February 2023

Harm and global health priority
Patient safety is a global public health priority. Worldwide, there is an unacceptable burden of preventable harm. Leaders and policymakers around the world must make achieving zero avoidable harm a top priority.

Implementation & implementation science
We know how to improve patient safety, but there are numerous implementation gaps. Implementation science offers tools to plan and execute an effective implementation process, including sustainable behaviour change. Assessing interventions before implementation should be a key requirement. «Adapt to Adopt» is a central principle in this regard, allowing individuals and systems to adapt implementation strategies for a more adequate adoption. Well-established infection control and prevention programs to reduce healthcare-associated infections are effective examples to support evidence-based implementation across different socio-economic and care settings.

Sustainability, infrastructure, capacity & capability
Sustaining improvements requires building capacity and capability. This includes teamwork, human factors and patient safety training, leadership skills, data literacy, safety culture, monitoring and feedback of progress as well as developing change capacity. Organizations, national states and regional entities need a capability plan.

Governance, trust & safety culture
A key role of regulatory governance is to design the direction and vision in partnership, allowing the work to be led locally. Governance should include improving the use of health data for continuous risk assessment and action within learning health systems, fostering public trust and a safety culture.

Mental health
Patients with mental health conditions have unique vulnerabilities and their safety matters. Implementing safety standards in mental healthcare is complex and needs a whole-of-society approach. Countries should assess the state of patient safety in mental healthcare, whether in the community or in healthcare facilities.

Health workforce safety
There is no patient safety without health workforce safety. The safety and well-being of health workers should be part of all national, regional and local improvement plans and emergency preparedness plans. This requires appropriate staffing as well as adequate and timely training.

Impact of COVID-19 on patient safety and lessons learned
The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged healthcare systems globally and the resilience of healthcare infrastructures and facilities. The disruption of systems and processes observed during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased risks and harms to patients (e.g., workforce shortage, disruptions in medication supply and increase of healthcare-associated infections). Integrated health system approaches with strengthened primary and acute care are needed. Scientific approaches and the involvement of professional and community groups are essential to build a resilient health system before the next pandemic. Patient safety should play a pivotal role in pandemic preparedness and response (PPR), as PPR can significantly benefit from the learning mechanisms established in this domain.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) & Antibiotic stewardship (ABS)
Increasing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a leading cause of death globally, which heavily compromises patient safety. Global cooperation is essential to preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobials, which means optimizing quantitative and qualitative use. This includes, for example, improving AMR surveillance, strengthening ABS and engaging stakeholders in the implementation of the WHO Global Action Plan on AMR.

International cooperation
International collaboration and exchange are mechanisms to avoid reinventing the wheel, so that each country can benefit from recent advances. National and international commitments to implementing the WHO Global Patient Safety Action Plan (GPSA) are essential. The GPSA should serve as a central tool on the road to zero avoidable harm in healthcare by 2030.