A Commentary on the Impact of Public Surgeon Performance Data on Hepatobiliary Practice Patterns in an African Centre

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Abstract

The publication of surgeon-specific outcome data is contentious, with implications for quality improvement and professional behaviour. Its impact within resource-limited African surgical settings is poorly understood. This commentary critiques a published study from Tygerberg Hospital, Cape Town, which evaluated a transparent data dashboard's effect on hepatobiliary practice. The objective is to analyse its findings and contextualise them within surgical quality assurance in Africa. As a commentary, it provides a critical narrative analysis of the published study's methodology and results, synthesising these with existing knowledge on audit, feedback, and behavioural change in surgery. Key insights: The original study reported a shift in practice patterns after dashboard implementation. A measurable increase in multidisciplinary team discussions for complex cases was noted, suggesting transparency fostered more collaborative decision-making. The commentary explores potential drivers and unintended consequences of this change. The public display of performance data can influence hepatobiliary surgical practice in an African centre, primarily by encouraging collective case review. Its long-term sustainability and effect on final patient outcomes require further study. Future implementations should include robust support for surgeons, ensure case-mix adjustment, and integrate data transparency within a holistic clinical governance framework. Research must focus on

patient-centred outcomes, not merely process measures. surgical outcomes, clinical audit, quality improvement, hepatobiliary surgery, data transparency, Africa This commentary appraises a significant local study, translating its findings into practical considerations for surgeons and hospital managers seeking to enhance surgical quality through data in similar resource-constrained environments.