

Strengthening the health system to improve trauma outcomes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

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 (DRC) 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.

KING'S GLOBAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The main arterial route running through the Kongo Central province of the DRC connects the Atlantic port cities of Boma and Matadi with the capital Kinshasa. Trauma incidents due to road traffic collisions are significant along this route, impacting the population of six million people, and represent a leading cause of death and disability. Current healthcare facilities are under-equipped and under-resourced to deal with the high number of injuries, or provide effective high-quality care for injured patients. We support our partners to strengthen the Kongo Central health system and improve trauma outcomes by building the capacity of individuals, institutions and systems.

1) TRAUMA SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

We work with our partners to improve institutional management of the trauma system in the four main hospitals in the province. We provide leadership training and support the development of management systems and processes, such as medical record keeping and improving patient flow.

Case studies

Trauma registry at the Hôpital Provincial de Référence de Kinkanda, Matadi
KGHP helped to introduce a trauma registry in the hospital. Trauma registries document data about acute care delivered to patients hospitalised with injuries. They are designed to provide information that can be used to improve the efficiency and quality of trauma care. Francophone registries were piloted over a period of three months, and following modifications, trauma cases are now prospectively recorded on arrival to hospital.

IMPACT

Since 2015, the King's Kongo Central Partnership has:



Developed the trauma and orthopaedic curriculum and supported teaching at the Université Joseph Kasa Vubu for 1,000 medical students, over 3 years



Trained 280 doctors and nurses in the first response management of trauma patients using the Primary Trauma Care (PTC) course programme



Introduced the WHO Safe Surgery Saves Lives programme in the 4 main hospitals in the province





2) TRAINING HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Trauma is a neglected area of training and good clinical skills to deliver quality trauma care are essential, from the initial assessment and management of patients to definitive surgical care (general, maxillofacial, orthopaedic and plastics). We work with our partners to support training of health workers from the province's four main hospitals and smaller health centres in all aspects of good clinical care.

Case studies

Primary Trauma Care (PTC) training courses

PTC is a system of training for front-line staff in trauma management, aimed at preventing death and disability in seriously injured patients. The two-day practical course is delivered free of charge within the Kongo Central province by PTC instructors we have trained, using the international framework of the PTC Foundation. The training has so far been run in Matadi, Boma, Muanda, Tshela, Lukula and Kimpese. Currently, there are 280 trained health workers in the province and 40 instructors. We continue to support the local PTC committee to expand

training across the province and in more remote areas.

Trauma and orthopaedics at the Université Joseph Kasa Vubu

Building on existing work and using context specific content we have helped redesign the trauma and orthopaedic curriculum for the university. A simple textbook was developed to support this. KGHP volunteers have taught three consecutive academic years at the university, reaching approximately 1,000 students, and mentored university faculty.

3) SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF CLINICAL CARE

During short and long-term placements, volunteer doctors and nurses support the delivery of clinical care and provide mentoring on complex trauma cases. Support and advice to partners is also offered remotely.

Case studies

Safe Surgery Saves Lives

In 2018, KGHP volunteers introduced the WHO Safe Surgery Saves Lives programme to a multidisciplinary surgical team from the four main hospitals in the

province. The training focused on the nine key areas of the WHO Safe Surgery programme, including the introduction of the WHO safe surgery checklist, infection prevention and control (IPC), good team working and quality improvement (QI) methodology. The training was cascaded down to the four hospitals over the subsequent 12 months, culminating in two-day, in-depth workshops at the four sites in February 2020.

COVID-19 Response

At the request of the provincial WHO office, and with the provincial COVID-19 task force, a two-day training programme was designed for healthcare workers on the clinical case management of COVID-19 patients. This was delivered by senior Congolese clinicians and our in-country coordinator, at the six COVID-19 treatment centres in the country. We continue to support provincial efforts in the pandemic response with more training for frontline health workers and a bespoke peer to peer, remote mentoring group.



4) TRAUMA RESEARCH

Interventions to strengthen the health system and individual patient care must be underpinned by a strong evidence base. Through teaching and developing the research capacity of medical students, clinicians and higher education institutions, we support our partners to build the evidence base for effective solutions to the challenges of treating trauma patients in low-resource settings.

Case studies

Kongo Central Research Conference

In 2018, the first research conference was held in Kongo Central, supported by the provincial health authorities. The theme for the conference was trauma in the DRC and work related to this was presented by doctors and nurses from the province.

Research Training

Research training has been run at the Université Joseph Kasa Vubu (UKV) for medical students, and research groups at UKV and the Hôpital Provincial de Référence de Kinkanda have been supported in ongoing research projects.



GET IN TOUCH

If you are interested in volunteering, collaborating or learning more about the work of King's Global Health Partnerships please contact us:

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