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Collaboration in Surgical Capacity Development: A Report of the Inaugural Meeting of the Strengthening Rwanda Surgery Initiative

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Abstract

Background Increasing access to surgical care is among the prioritized healthcare initiatives in Rwanda and other low income countries, where only 3.5 % of surgical procedures worldwide are being performed. Partnerships among surgeons at academic medical centers, non-governmental organizations, and representatives of industry for building sustainable local surgical capacity in developing settings should be explored.

Methods With the goal of improving collaboration and coordination among the many stakeholders in Rwandan surgery, the Rwanda Surgical Society (RSS) convened a participatory workshop of these groups in Kigali in March 2011. The meeting consisted of presentations from Rwandan surgical leaders and focused brainstorming sessions on collaborative methods for surgical capacity building.

Results The outcome of the meeting was a set of recommendations to the Rwandan Ministry of Health (MOH) and the formation of an ad hoc team, the Strengthening Rwanda Surgery (SRS) Advising Group. The inaugural meeting of the advising group served to establish common goals, a framework for ongoing communication and collaboration, and commitment to a fully Rwandan agenda for surgical and anesthesia capacity development. The SRS Advising Group continues to meet and collaborate on training initiatives and has been integrated into the MOH plan to scale up human resources across disciplines.

ConclusionsThe SRS Initiative serves as an example of the concept of early communication and international collaboration in global surgical and anesthesia capacity building partnerships.