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Increasing accessibility to surgical knowledge-sharing across Southern Africa: The “horizontal” conference model

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Recognizing that advancements in global surgery are urgently needed in South Africa, where health inequity is rampant and surgical knowledge gaps remain, the Southern African Student Surgical Society partnered with the University of Cape Town Division of Global Surgery to organize a symposium entitled “Reimagining Perioperative Care in Africa.” The aim of the symposium was to address these needs through informative Global Surgery presentations, a virtual research competition, and an online Theory of Change Workshop, thereby advocating for improved surgical care in Africa through knowledge-sharing and education. By breaking down hierarchical structures through the formation of a collaborative, multidisciplinary Organizing Committee comprised of students and clinicians, a virtual “horizontal” conference model was created. This successfully allowed for the development of a cost-effective, far-reaching, collaboratively organized conference, that catered to both students’ and clinicians’ needs. Endorsed by the Director General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, this virtual “horizontal” model enabled the Organizing Committees to assemble experts from multiple surgical disciplines across Southern Africa, to achieve their mutual goal of finding African solutions to strengthen surgical systems.

Recent Publications

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2. Majiet, M., Lee, S., He, Z., Verhage, S., & Breedt, D. (2021). Southern African Student Surgical Society (SASSS) and University of Cape Town Division of Global Surgery Symposium: Developing a pipeline of surgical student researchers collaboratively. *South African Medical Journal*, 111(7), 606. doi:10.7196/SAMJ.2021.v111i7.15684
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