

Learning culture  
Safety walkrounds  
Process  
Outcome  
WHO checklist  
Surgical site infections  
Safe medication  
Correct patient identification  
**Improvement**  
Patient Safety Friendly Hospital Initiative  
Reporting system  
Hospital acquired infections  
High alert medication  
Assessment  
Safe surgery  
Falls prevention  
Medical error  
Indicators

# Patient safety tool kit



World Health  
Organization

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

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## Foreword

Patient safety is considered a priority for health systems worldwide. In the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, available data show that, on average, health care-related harmful incidents affect 8 in 100 patients, and 4 out of 5 incidents are preventable.

In 2011, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean published the *Patient safety assessment manual* as part of the WHO patient safety friendly hospital initiative. It aims to assess the level of compliance against a set of evidence-based standards covering the various domains of patient safety at the hospital level. Since the manual was published efforts have been made by local teams for the expansion and ownership of this initiative as a tool that enables them to understand and assess the level of safety in their health care institutions. A second edition of the manual is currently in preparation.

This new publication, *Patient safety tool kit*, builds on the growing regional need to develop the capacities of health professionals with regard to developing a patient safety improvement programme at the operational level and implementing corrective measures, adapted to local settings.

Universal health coverage has been proposed as a goal for health in the next round of global development priorities post-2015. The bottom line is that simply expanding access will not be enough unless we simultaneously ensure that the care provided is of sufficiently high quality, where safety should be one of its core dimensions.

Improving patient safety and reducing the burden of unsafe care must continue to be an important priority for all the health care systems in the Region. I encourage ministries of health, as well as academic institutions and professional associations to own and make use of the *Patient safety tool kit*.

Ala Alwan  
WHO Regional Director  
for the Eastern Mediterranean

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## Introduction

### The tool kit

Across the world there are many different approaches, tools, resources and guidelines addressing improvement of patient safety. These are largely concerned with describing the actions required to improve safety. Increasingly the focus in all countries is to address the “how”, specifically how to help create the necessary conditions to ensure that appropriate activities are undertaken reliably and in a sustained manner that will result in safer care.

The WHO patient safety friendly hospital initiative aims to assist institutions within countries to launch a comprehensive patient safety programme. It involves assessment of the level of patient safety in health care facilities. The *Patient safety assessment manual*, published by WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean in 2011 and developed as part of the initiative, aimed at measuring patient safety programmes at health care facilities and instilling a culture of safety. It comprises a set of standards that enable health care facilities to identify areas where improvement is required. It is also intended to motivate staff to take part in patient safety improvement.

The *Patient safety tool kit* is a complementary tool that is intended to help health care professionals implementing patient safety improvement programmes. It describes the practical steps and actions needed to build a comprehensive patient safety improvement programme (Box 1). It blends the best of current approaches into a single, comprehensive resource. The emphasis is on its practical value to health care leadership and management and front-line clinicians. It describes a systematic approach to identifying the “what” and the “how” of patient safety. It acknowledges that patient safety is one component of an overall quality strategy.

Where possible, unnecessary explanations or evidence that already exist across multiple sources have been omitted. The focus is on providing information and suggestions that will be of operational value with an emphasis on avoiding duplication and distractions and providing an efficient, useful resource. There is no one single approach that is suitable to all health care facilities. The tool kit is structured in a way that will help the reader navigate patient safety improvement in a logical way, informed by the available evidence. It aims to maximize the likelihood of developing/strengthening and implementing a successful patient safety programme, including contextually relevant interventions, so that avoidable patient harm is minimized.

#### Box 1. Rationale for the *Patient safety tool kit*

The *Patient safety tool kit* is a hands-on instrument for improving patient safety. It will help raise

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