

# Patient safety assessment manual



**World Health  
Organization**

Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean



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## ► Foreword

Unsafe health care remains a problem of immense magnitude worldwide. While the past decade has witnessed remarkable progress towards improved patient safety, many gaps still exist and harm inflicted on patients by adverse health care events remains unacceptably high. The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region covers 22 countries and a population of over 530 million. It is estimated that the Region has over 4500 public sector hospitals and over 4100 private sector hospitals, with approximately 800 000 hospital beds in the public sector alone. The number of hospital admissions is estimated to exceed 30 million each year. The number of inpatients warrants special attention to patient safety in hospitals in the Region.

In response to increasing awareness and concern at the situation, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean launched a patient safety programme in the Region. Action was guided by a regional strategy comprising five approaches: awareness-raising; assessing the scale of the problem; understanding the causes of error; developing and testing methods of prevention; and organizing and running patient safety programmes. Patient safety research was conducted in six countries and the research network is being expanded to more countries of the Region. The development of solutions and initiatives aimed at driving change towards greater patient safety has become a pressing need, and is recognized by the public health community. As part of one such initiative – the patient safety friendly hospital initiative – the Regional Office developed a set of patient safety standards, with the aim of assessing the patient safety programmes in hospitals and instilling a culture of safety.

Assessment based on the standards in this manual requires training and expertise. Development of a critical mass of trained evaluators is essential and it is hoped that this manual will be used extensively within and outside the Region in the future. The manual has been through multiple rounds of revision by regional and international experts. It has been pilot-tested and found to be valid and reliable. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement and contributions towards further development and constructive editing are invited.

I encourage ownership of the assessment tools in the manual by ministries of health, as well as academic institutions and professional associations. WHO will continue to facilitate the assessment process to provide technical and capacity-building support. I hope that this manual will become a reference for all those who strive to improve patient safety in health care.



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WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean

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