

Experts look back at the impact of a global surgical safety checklist

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A new *BJS (British Journal of Surgery)* article examines the past decade since the Safe Surgery Saves Lives Study Group at the World Health Organization introduced a surgical safety checklist. The 19-item checklist was designed to improve team communication and consistency of care, with the goal of reducing complications and deaths associated with surgery.

The article notes that numerous studies have evaluated both the impact of the checklist and challenges in its implementation. In the 10 years since the launch of the checklist, surgical teamwork and communication have improved, as have outcomes for patients. It is important that the checklist is used effectively as part of safe surgical systems, not as a simple tick box exercise to be completed by rote.

"Use of a surgical [checklist](#) has moved from a good idea to standard of care, yet this seemingly simple safety tool is remarkably difficult to implement. This is particularly true in settings with poor resources and weak management systems; however, those hospitals are the ones that could potentially benefit the most," said co-author Dr. Thomas Weiser, of the University of Edinburgh, in the UK. "Many people are working to promote its appropriate adoption and use worldwide."

More information: T. G. Weiser et al, Ten years of the Surgical Safety Checklist, *British Journal of Surgery* (2018). [DOI: 10.1002/bjs.10907](#)

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