



Kenya Medical Association

Championing the Welfare of Doctors and Quality Healthcare in Kenya



JOINT STATEMENT BY THE KENYA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (KMA) AND THE KENYA OBSTETRICAL AND GYNAECOLOGICAL SOCIETY (KOGS) ON THE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF SURGICAL CARE IN MATERNAL HEALTH

20th February 2025

The Kenya Medical Association (KMA) and the Kenya Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society (KOGS) are deeply committed to upholding the highest standards of patient care and safety in Kenya's health sector. Our responsibility, as regulated professionals by KMPDC and custodians of medical ethics and professional standards, is to ensure that every Kenyan receives quality healthcare that aligns with best medical practices, established legal frameworks, and global patient safety guidelines.

Concerns Over Expanding the Scope of Practice Without Adequate Training and Regulation

In recent times, there have been increasing demands by clinical officers and other allied health care providers to independently conduct surgical procedures, including Caesarean sections. While we recognize the critical role that all healthcare providers play in delivering services to our population, we must unequivocally state that surgery, particularly obstetric and gynaecologic surgery, requires highly specialized training, rigorous and continuous competency assessments, and strict adherence to globally accepted medical and surgical safety standards.

The independent performance of such procedures by cadres without the requisite surgical training, accreditation, and oversight directly endangers the lives of mothers and newborns. Maternal mortality and morbidity remain a national concern, and inappropriate delegation of surgical responsibilities risks worsening this crisis further.

The Legal and Ethical Imperatives: "Do No Harm"

The scope of practice for various medical cadres in Kenya is clearly defined in law and reinforced through professional regulatory bodies. Any expansion of these roles must be guided by robust evidence, structured training, and regulatory frameworks—not political lobbying or workforce shortages. The principle of "**Primum non nocere**" (**First, do no harm**) must guide all policy decisions in healthcare.

Call for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Healthcare Policy

KMA and KOGS call upon the Ministry of Health, Parliament, and all relevant stakeholders to:

1. **Uphold Professional Standards:** Ensure that any modifications to healthcare practice are backed by scientific evidence and rigorous competency-based training, rather than political negotiations.
2. **Prioritize Patient Safety:** Maintain a structured, team-based approach where all professionals work within their regulated scope of practice to enhance patient outcomes rather than compromise them.
3. **Strengthen Surgical Training Pipeline:** Invest in training more medical specialists and medical officers to meet the growing demand for surgical services while ensuring patient safety is not compromised.
4. **Enhance Oversight and Regulation:** Ensure that all surgical procedures are conducted by professionals legally recognized and adequately trained to perform them including the facilitation of medical training via formal medical schools for clinical officers who wish to pursue this path.
5. **Engage in Meaningful Stakeholder Consultations:** Any proposed changes in medical practice must involve substantive engagement with professional bodies, medical regulatory authorities, and the wider healthcare community.

Conclusion

Kenya has made significant strides in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality and improving general well being of women, but much remains to be done. Compromising surgical safety through unregulated practices will only erode the gains we have made. KMA and KOGS will continue advocating for evidence-based policies that protect patients, uphold professional integrity, and strengthen Kenya's health system.

We urge the Ministry of Health and policymakers to remain steadfast in upholding the principles of safe, high-quality, and patient-centered care for all Kenyans.

Signed,



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