

The Second Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety 29-30 March 2017, Bonn, Germany

A Global Movement on Patient Safety

Executive Summary

Political commitment and leadership flourished for patient safety as Ministers of Health and high level delegates from 45 countries (across different geographical regions and levels of economic development), representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), European Union (EU), World Bank (WB) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and international and national experts convened at the second Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety. Around 350 attendees participated in the Summit which was held in Bonn, Germany on 29-30 March 2017, hosted by the German Federal Ministry of Health, with co-sponsorship from WHO.



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The former capital of Germany where the contracts for the reunification of Germany were signed in 1990, provided an ideal backdrop for uniting global health leaders in the drive behind the progressive global patient safety movement. This event followed from the first Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety held in London last year, hosted by the UK government. Therewith, the UK and German governments jointly laid the foundation for a 'Global Movement on Patient Safety'. Each year a different country will host the Ministerial Summit, with Japan being the host of the third Ministerial Summit next year.

The first day of the Summit was organized as an 'Expert Summit' with six parallel workshops addressing key technical areas in patient safety, and then elaborating the outcome of these workshops, as three key political messages for the ministerial briefing. The topics of the workshops were: *Economy and efficiency of patient safety; Global patient safety: perspectives from low- and middle-income countries (hosted by WHO); Patient safety and m-Health/big data/hand-held services; Prevention and control of infectious diseases; Increased safety of diagnostics and treatment – checklists and other tools; and Safety of medication therapy and the launch of the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge on Medication Safety.*

The second day of the Summit was organized as the 'Ministerial Summit', which was opened by Hermann Gröhe, Minister of Health, Germany and Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, UK, followed by Margaret Chan, Director General, WHO) and keynote-speaker Victor Dzau, President US National Academy of Medicine. Ministers of Health and representatives of WB and OECD then expressed their thoughts and commitment to patient safety.



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In addition, the Summit provided a great opportunity and an ideal springboard to launch the WHO Global Patient Safety Challenge on Medication Safety in the presence of Ministers of Health, policy-makers and experts, through implementing solutions for strengthening systems to reduce medication errors and medication-related harm. The overall goal of this Challenge is to reduce severe, avoidable medication-related harm by 50% in the next five years, worldwide. This launch event provided an overview of the Challenge and outlined intended actions at country, regional and global levels. The Challenge seeks to improve safety through actions aimed at addressing each of four areas - patients, medicines, health-care professionals and systems and practices of medication.

WHO Director General Margaret Chan was overwhelmed with support for a 'World Patient Safety Day' to be celebrated annually on 17 September.. In the words of keynote-speaker Victor Dzau, President of the US National Academy of Medicine, "this journey of a thousand miles begins with a first step – an official WHO World Patient Safety Day". It was the shared understanding of all delegations that efforts to bring more attention to the cause of patient safety must be combined in this initiative. Acting on that, the German Federal Minister of Health in agreement with the UK Secretary of State for Health stepped up and announced: "Together with our colleagues from the United Kingdom, we will draft a resolution for the 2018 World Health Assembly and will be counting on your support."



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Apart from the obvious clinical imperative, the financial imperative of patient safety was stressed greatly, seeking prioritization, unwavering support and commitment from all delegates for patient safety globally. WHO Director General signalled to Victor Dzau during the discussion that the Patient Safety argument should be presented to the Finance Ministers at the next major financial meeting hosted by the World Bank in April 2018. This gained great traction, following the OECD representative statement that "every \$1 invested, you could see between \$9-\$20 in return in low- and middle-income countries". Additionally, in the era of the Sustainable-Development Goals, the World Bank representative declared "this is one of the greatest challenges for Universal Health Coverage – if health services are unsafe, your people will have no trust in it, and they will not use the service".

The Ministers of Health and high level delegates from all 45 countries who attended the Summit, all displayed great compassion and commitment to this cause, sharing stories of tragic patient harm in their countries as they pledged to drive forward this agenda at the political level. The Italian Minister of Health shared tragic stories of neo-natal deaths due to poor patient care in her country claiming “I felt deep grief for those families” as she pledged to continue the fight against patient harm. This global patient safety movement represents the best of both top-down, political commitment from leaders and bottom-up grassroots support from patient testimonies. The Omani health Minister stated “we have the tools, we have the knowledge, and now we have the political commitment. What we need now is action, and that is why we are here”.



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The moral imperative of patient safety was emphasized throughout the Summit greatly urging Ministers to pay closest attention to patient safety to improve the quality of life for all of their citizens by strengthening their health care systems and processes. To quote the UK Secretary of State for Health, “Every patient matters, my brother, sister, mother or child. But the truth is, we have a huge level of harm, and not every patient matters. Which is why the leadership displayed by each of the Ministers here matters display that commitment politically, yet it is where most ministers fear to go by speaking these uncomfortable truths”.

In his concluding remarks the host of the 2nd Global Ministerial Summit, German Federal Minister of Health Hermann Gröhe perfectly captured the spirit of the two days: “The need for developing a patient safety culture is indisputable. And so is the importance of leadership. Adding up those two simple truths should make each of us stand up and act.”

Links to 2nd Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety:

<http://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/en/health/patient-safety-summit-2017.html> (English version)

<http://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/index.php?id=2832> (German version)