

COSECSA Oxford Orthopaedic Link (COOL) is a multi-country partnership programme between the Nuffield Department of Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences (NDORMS) at the University of Oxford (based at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre) and the College of Surgeons of East Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA_ASEA), an independent body that fosters postgraduate education in surgery and provides surgical training throughout this region. COSECSA's primary objective is to advance education, training, standards, research & practice in surgical care in East, Central and Southern Africa (www.cosecsa.org).

The three-year COOL programme (2012-2015) combines research and training in trauma and musculoskeletal impairment (TMSI) care across ten sub-Saharan countries in the COSECSA region: Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It aims to meet the critical need for more health workers trained in treating serious injury and musculoskeletal impairment in the region.

Research Aims:

1. Detailed understanding of the epidemiology of TMSI in children, and the consequent treatment needs of children living in the COSECSA region;
2. Detailed understanding of the current provision of care for children with TMSI living in the COSECSA region; and
3. Increased evidence base to indicate that the life of a child with TMSI can be improved (including prospects for education and employment) with appropriate treatment.

Training Aims:

Increased capacity, quality, and consistency of training in TMSI throughout the COSECSA region for all grades of health personnel through:

4. Development of training resources;
5. Delivery of Primary Trauma Care ("PTC") and orthopaedic training courses;
6. Increasing the number of healthcare workers with training in TMSI (especially those trained to be trainers) used to deliver such orthopaedic training courses;
7. Incorporation of appropriate PTC courses/methods into local training courses; and
8. Increased Ministries of Health interest in TMSI reflected in national health plan, budget and activities.

Capacity Building Aims:

Strengthen the capacity of COSECSA to maintain and improve standards of care for TMSI through:

9. The establishment of a sustainable COSECSA TMSI office;

10. Increasing the interest of TMSI trained healthcare workers to run further TMSI training and research activities;
11. Identifying new research projects to look at areas of TMSI management that can be improved; and
12. Advocacy activities (such as giving presentations) to raise the interest the international community in supporting future COSECSA TMSI activity.

Key Programme Activities:

- Undertaking an epidemiological survey of the prevalence of TMSI in Malawi, and other related TMSI studies to measure the need for and capacity to deliver TMSI services;
- Delivering approximately forty five PTC courses across the COSECSA region, including training new instructors;
- Discussing with the Ministries of Health of the countries in the COSECSA region and TMSI training providers plans to incorporate TMSI methods and courses into local training programmes;
- Providing three one-week, specialised orthopaedic surgical training courses in TMSI;
- Providing eighteen six month clinical fellowships in paediatric orthopaedic surgery;
- Establishing facilities for further TMSI activity in the COSECSA region;
- Assisting the involvement of approximately fifty UK based health professionals as volunteers to assist in the provision of the Programme.

The COOL Programme is funded through the Health Partnership Scheme Programme, which is funded by the UK Department for International Development (“DFID”) for the benefit of the UK and partner country health sectors. The Health Partnership Scheme aims, amongst other things, to foster and support links with partner organisations in developing countries in the field of healthcare. Other key partners for the COOL Programme are the Primary Trauma Care Foundation, CURE International, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, amongst others.

COOL Steering Committee

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