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## ANSWER: WRONG SITE SURGERY (WSS)

Wrong site surgery (WSS) consists of "surgery performed on the wrong side or site of the body, wrong surgical procedure performed, and surgery performed on the wrong patient". WSS is defined as a sentinel event (i.e., an unexpected occurrence involving death or serious physical or psychological injuries, or the risk thereof) by the Joint Commission (JC).<sup>1</sup>

It continues to be recorded in the USA and UK and across all surgical specialties, particularly Ophthalmology and Orthopaedics.<sup>1,2</sup> Although these events are rare, WSS affects patients and the surgical teams, at times with adverse publicity in the common media. It has effect on various aspects including psychological impact on well-being of health care professionals involved, medicolegal, social and emotional damage to individual and reputation of the organisation.<sup>2</sup>

Communication failure, noncompliance with procedures and issues with leadership were identified as the top root causes of WSS by the JC. The causes of WSS have also been divided into system and process factors.<sup>1</sup>

Various steps for prevention of WSS have been suggested. These include The Universal Protocol for Preventing WSS from JC and the WHO surgical safety checklist.<sup>1,3</sup> These have been universally accepted but not strictly followed. The goals of these protocols are to drastically reduce or eliminate completely the incidence of WSS by using a standardised routine and acceptable preoperative process. The guidelines cover preoperative verification of procedure, marking the operative site and "time out" immediately before starting the procedure. However, the

effectiveness of the above tools depends highly on the individual or organisations.<sup>2,3</sup>

## REFERENCES

- 1: Mulloy DF, Hughes RG. [Chapter 36: Wrong Site Surgery: A Preventable Medical Error](#). Patient safety and quality: An evidence-based handbook for nurses. Ed. Hughes RG. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ Publication No. 08-0043). Rockville, MD, 2008. [Accessed on April 15, 2020].
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- 3: Panesar S, Noble D, Mirza S, Patel B, Mann B, Emerton M *et al.* [Can the surgical checklist reduce the risk of wrong site surgery in orthopaedics? - can the checklist help? Supporting evidence from analysis of a national patient incident reporting system](#). *Journal of Orthopaedic Surgery and Research*. 2011;6:18. doi: 10.1186/1749-799x-6-18. [Accessed on April 15, 2020].