

22 September 2019 – Lina Suhail had just undergone her third caesarian section in Al-Karkh Hospital when WHO launched its first World Patient Safety Day. Unlike other patients, Suhail was happy with the services that she received from this hospital. “All staff have been very helpful in giving me and other patients all the medications and personal care which hastened the healing process. This is a rare occurrence in most health facilities here. I think this was the main reason the caesarian operation was successful,” said Lina Suhail.

“The biggest challenge that many patients face and that may not make them as lucky as I am, is the issue of poor hygiene and the inadequate supply of medical products - such as medicines and medical equipment - to treat and manage complicated or simple health conditions,” added Suhail.

According to Iman Kashmoula, the Patient Safety Unit Officer at Al-Karkh Baghdad Health Department, the patient safety programme has been implemented in 13 hospitals in Iraq since 2018, focusing mainly on preventing medical errors and adverse events that patients are exposed to.

“Not all hospitals in Iraq have been able to reach the patient safety standards. This is mainly due to lack of financial allocations, inadequate effective follow-up by specialists in the field of patient safety, and the huge numbers of patients compared to the medical staff available to deliver the services,” said Iman Kashmoula.

Dr Ahmed Abdel-Hassan, chairperson of the Patient Safety Committee at Al-Karkh Maternity Hospital shared what makes the hospital unique in terms of patient safety.

“At Al-Karkh Maternity Hospital, we follow all the 140 patient safety standards provided by the Ministry of Health, among them, identifying patients before any medical procedure is done, marking high-risk medicines in distinctive colours, ensuring that patients forms are correctly filled by competent medical professionals and providing safe transfer of patients from the theatres to the admission rooms,” said Dr Ahmed Abdel-Hassan

“Patient safety aims to prevent and reduce risks, errors, and harm that occur to patients during

the provision of health care. Unsafe care is likely one of the 10 leading causes of death and disability in the world. In Iraq, health professionals are working hard to prevent these events” as Ms Hudham Ismail Hammoud, the Head of Nurses in Al-Karkh Maternity Hospital, said. “Iraq, like many countries, is faced with many challenges that compromise the safety of patients. To minimize risks associated with patient safety, it is prudent that the government increases the number of health facilities to cope with the problem of overcrowding, creates awareness among patients and health workers on issues of patient safety and increases the number of nurses, doctors, and health service providers to cope with patient numbers. Others are the provision of all preventive supplies such as sterilization materials and patient identification bracelets,” said Ms Hudham Ismail Hammoud.

Although health care providers in Iraq are receiving tremendous support from the health authorities to reduce the burden of harm caused to patients as a result of medication errors, healthcare-associated infections, unsafe surgical care procedures, and unsafe injections practices in health care settings, the disruption of the health system in country over the last few years has left it ill equipped. Other harm that is likely to affect patients includes diagnostic errors, unsafe transfusion practices, radiation errors, sepsis, and venous thromboembolism.

Regionally, evidence has shown that up to 18% of hospital admissions are associated with adverse events, 80% of which are preventable. Patients may be at risk of harm if the care they receive is not satisfactory, whether that is because it is delayed, inefficient, inequitable, of poor quality, not based on the latest evidence or represents a financial burden on the patient and their family. Globally, WHO is prioritizing patient safety as a global health priority and urging patients, health care workers, policy-makers and health care industry to “speak up for patient safety”. Key factors of patient safety strategies recommended by WHO are clear policies, leadership capacity, and data to drive safety improvements, skilled health care professionals and effective engagement of patients in their own care.

Today, WHO and the Ministry of Health of Iraq joined the global campaign to launch World Patient Safety Day under the theme, “*Speak Up for Patient Safety*.” Through this campaign, WHO and the Ministry mobilized patients, their families, health workers, policy-makers, academicians, researchers, professional networks and the healthcare industry to speak up. They did this by visiting and listening to the voices of patients in Al-Karkh Maternity Hospital and by conducting a patient safety symposium in the same hospital. In the afternoon, a press conference was held in the National Museum in Baghdad to raise public awareness of the importance of patient safety. In the afternoon, the city’s sky was lit in orange to commemorate the importance of the day.

Related link

[World Patient Safety Day](#)

For more information, please contact:

Ms Pauline Loyce Ajello
Mobile: +964 772 987 7288
ajellopa@who.int

Ms Baraa Afif Shaba
Mobile: +964 780 001 0244
Shabab@who.int

Ms Ajyal Manssour Al-Sultany
Mobile: +964 774 089 2878
sultanya@who.int

Friday 26th of April 2024 11:58:00 PM