"TRAINING AND QUALITY OF WORK OF MID-LEVEL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS FOR SURGERY (NPCS) IN MOZAMBIQUE".

Caetano Pereira, MD, PhD
Ministry of Health Mozambique

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Training of Non-Physician Clinicians (NPC) as a response to the human resource crisis in Mozambique

- In 1980, Mozambican health system weakened especially in rural areas due to civil war.
- 80 NPCs were trained to face significant unmet need for obstetric emergencies and war casualties.
- Outside the three central hospitals (that serve 10% of the population), the "técnicos" now constitute the backbone of emergency surgical care in Mozambique for 90% of the population.
Characteristics of trainees to NPCs

• Trainees to become NPCs/TCs have two years of clinical surgical training at the Central Hospital in Maputo, followed by one year “internship” supervised by qualified surgeons and obstetricians at regional hospital level.

• Nurses/midwives, "técnicos de medicina", clinical officers trained for clinical activities, particularly diagnostics and treatment of obstetric emergencies and trauma.

• The trainees have previous three years clinical experience, some of them in surgery, which is an advantage.
NPCs’ work are safe and effective and include wide range of major surgery

- No clinically significant differences in postoperative outcomes between 978 caesarean deliveries performed by técnicos and 1,113 caesarean deliveries carried out by obstetricians.
- Others TCs’ major surgeries interventions are obstetric hysterectomies, fetotomies, bowel resections, skin transplants, colostomies, splenectomies and war surgery.
- 70% were emergency interventions and the postoperative mortality was 0.1 for elective interventions and 0.4% for emergency interventions.
NPCs, if duly trained, expand access to comprehensive EmOC

- NPCs perform about 90% of major surgical interventions in obstetrics at district hospital level in Mozambique.
NPCs, Técnicos are well retained in the district hospitals

A revision of retention rates of técnicos compared to doctors (graduating in 1987, 1988 and 1996), revealed that seven years after graduation:

Técnicos (n=34)
• 88% of them remain in district hospitals at seven years after graduation

Doctors (n=59)
• Often there was not a single one in a district hospital at seven years after graduation
Técnicos’ quality of care widely accepted

A study assessing perceptions among health staff of the standard of care provided by the técnicos, found that 90% of doctors, including surgeons, obstetricians, traumatologists, and other health workers rated the care provided by the técnicos favourably.
Enabling environment

• In Mozambique, over the last decade there has been a strong commitment from the government.

• A Higher Institute of Health Sciences was created to clarify career paths for técnicos de cirurgia.

• The Ministry of Health approved the Human Resource Plan for the development of the HRH, focusing on management, supervision, work condition, (rehabilitation of infrastructure and equipment) and retention.
Conclusions

• Obstetric surgery, including caesarean sections, and other surgical emergencies can be provided by NPCs, duly trained, with good quality even in remote areas where there are no doctors.

• Task-shifting and task-sharing are feasible strategies in comprehensive emergency obstetric care and should be seriously considered, to address the human resource crisis in other countries with a similar crisis like Mozambique in human resources for health.
20 years with surgically trained assistant medical officers (tecnicos cirurgia) saving mother’s lives in Mozambique