

# Partnership to increase patient safety in the clinical field: training, organisational and infra-structural improvements in Cameroon



**HOSPITAL  
PARTNERSHIPS**

The Medical Faculty of the University of Rostock, the Brandenburg Medical School, the Limbe Regional Hospital and the Bamenda Regional Hospital, Cameroon

## The challenge

The Cameroonian health system is largely organised centrally by the Ministry of Public Health in Jaunde. Each of the ten regions of Cameroon has a regional hospital, which functions as a tertiary referral hospital, as well as subordinate district hospitals and health centres.

According to the CIA World Fact Book, life expectancy in Cameroon is 58,5 years (Germany: 80,7 years). HIV prevalence is around 5%. Malaria is holoendemic in large parts of the country, and tuberculosis incidence was 220 per 100.000 in 2014 (Germany: 5,6 per 100.000).

The Cameroonian health care system suffers from a shortage of staff, with 16 nurses and two doctors per 10.000 inhabitants (OECD countries: approx. 100 nurses and 20-40 doctors per 10.000). Salaries in the health sector are low. Patients are often required to pay unofficial 'fees'.

Patient safety in Cameroon is impaired by a number of factors, including pharmacological polypharmacy (the administering of different medicines concurrently) and inadequate monitoring of critically ill patients. Indication-based decisions for laboratory and imaging examinations are poor, and there are shortcomings in hygiene (e.g. disinfection).

Standard procedures are lacking, especially for the emergency room and high-dependence monitoring, and there are no regulations for the instruction and further training of cleaning personnel. Finally, rules do not exist for dealing constructively with mistakes without 'shaming and blaming'. Standard operating procedures are already available for the laboratory service; however, the areas of pre-analytics (e.g. indication) and post-analytics (e.g. results reporting) still require special attention.

## Partnership activities

The partnership to improve patient safety can be divided into three phases.

In the first phase, the most important safety deficits in everyday clinical life will be identified through joint observations and discussions. German-Cameroonian teams will be formed and the workflows in the hospital will be examined.

In the second phase of the project, common solutions for the above-mentioned problems will be worked out. These may be standard operating instructions, training courses or similar.

In the third project phase, the previously developed standards will be integrated into daily clinical routine and regularly monitored by German-Cameroonian teams.

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*'The previous phases of the partnership between the Regional Hospitals in Limbe and Bamenda have focussed on the training of laboratory personnel and on technical capacity building in the laboratories. The goal of the present phase is the strengthening of patient safety in the clinical sections of the partner hospitals.'*

**PD.Dr. med. Hemmer, University Hospital of Rostock**

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In addition, the partnership will employ a number of other instruments. Numerous workshops and training sessions will be conducted as part of the capacity building process. A triage system will be introduced in the emergency room and various measures will be taken to improve hygiene awareness within the hospital. Furthermore, a system for constructive discussion of errors will be developed and complicated cases will be discussed using telemedicine.



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development



## Financing

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## Results

- The medical and nursing staff are available to patients and uphold diagnostic-therapeutic standards in the emergency room and the wards. Personnel comply with hygiene rules.
- Security in pre- and post-analytics (e.g. identification and handling of patient samples) is improved.
- Cleaning personnel are aware of the dangers involved in disposing of clinical waste and the rules for safe disposal. New cleaning staff will receive instruction before starting work.

## The partners

The University of Rostock has been cooperating with the regional hospital in Limbe since 2008 and with the regional hospital in Bamenda since 2014.

### Institutions in Cameroon

Limbe Regional Hospital (200 beds) serves the south-western region of Cameroon as a tertiary referral centre. It specialises in internal medicine, surgery, gynaecology/obstetrics and paediatrics, and has a tuberculosis ward and an HIV outpatient clinic. It is a medical teaching hospital (University of Buea) and offers supervision to subordinate health institutions.

Bamenda Regional Hospital (400 beds) serves the north-western region of Cameroon as a tertiary referral centre. It has departments dealing with internal medicine, surgery, paediatrics, gynaecology / obstetrics and radiology, a tuberculosis ward and an HIV outpatient clinic. It is a teaching hospital for medical students (University of Bamenda) and supervises subordinate health facilities.

### Institution in Germany

The Medical Faculty of the University of Rostock has 2.000 students of human medicine. The Department of Tropical

Medicine and Infectious Diseases comprises 20 beds, outpatient clinics for HIV, tropical diseases, Lyme disease, and hepatitis, and a laboratory for parasitology.

## Overview

<b>Name</b>	<b>Partnership to increase patient safety in the clinical field: training, organisational and infrastructural improvements</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	Improvement of patient safety in patient care, pre-analytics and post-analysis of laboratory services	
<b>Countries</b>	Cameroon	Germany
<b>Cities</b>	Limbe Bamenda	Rostock
<b>Institutions</b>	Limbe Regional Hospital Bamenda Regional Hospital	Medical Faculty of the University of Rostock
<b>Term</b>	July 2017 – April 2019	
<b>Budget</b>	110.000 EURO	

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