

# Surgery & Integrative Medicine

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## Improving Compliance with the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist at An-Najah National University Hospital

The World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the Surgical Safety Checklist (SSC) as part of its Safe Surgery Saves Lives programme to reduce surgical morbidity and mortality worldwide. Despite its established effectiveness, inconsistent completion of the checklist was observed at An-Najah National University Hospital (NNUH), posing a potential risk to patient safety. This quality improvement project aimed to achieve full (100%) compliance with the WHO SSC across all surgical operations by the end of 2025. A baseline audit conducted between September 2022 and December 2023 revealed that only 70.2% of checklists were fully completed and 34.2% were partially completed. Root cause analysis identified gaps in staff awareness, lack of accountability, and absence of visual reminders as key contributors to noncompliance.

In early 2024, a multifaceted intervention was implemented, including educational workshops, visual reminders, the introduction of a “Red Rule” policy requiring SSC completion before incision, and assigning a dedicated checklist coordinator in each operating room. Follow-up data (September 2024–May 2025) demonstrated significant improvement, with 100% of checklists fully completed and none partially or uncompleted. Sustainability was ensured through continuous education, monthly monitoring, and integration of the “Red Rule” into institutional policy. This initiative not only achieved its target but also strengthened the culture of patient safety and teamwork within the surgical department at NNUH.

### Keywords

patient safety, surgery, WHO checklist, quality improvement, compliance, education

### Biography

Dr. Safaa Jamal Abtli is a medical doctor at An-Najah National University Hospital and a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Medicine and Allied Medical Sciences at An-Najah National University. An active contributor to surgical quality improvement initiatives. With a background in medical education and patient safety. Current work focuses on optimizing surgical processes, fostering multidisciplinary teamwork, and sustaining a culture of safety in the operating theatre.