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Simukayi Percy Machawira

Parirenyatwa Hospital, Harare zimbabwe

Recent Developments in Cardiac surgery in Zimbabwe

Open heart surgery has become more readily available worldwide, especially in the West, whilst it remains elusive for the majority of the people in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Zimbabwe in particular. Efforts to provide the service began in the 1950s and open heart surgery became a regular service from 1989 to 2003. From 1997, Zimbabwe went through a phase of political and economic turmoil resulting in the disruption of meaningful service. This study seeks to make the case for prioritization of domestic resources toward open heart surgery, taken as learning from African countries that faced a similar predicament such as Ghana but who have since been able to sustain their programs. To ensure the success of the program, the following are necessary: the requisite personnel, equipment, consumables, and competitive remuneration. The plan is to work with Government, the private sector, and other players to harness resources toward sustainable open heart surgery in Zimbabwe. Open heart surgery has been resumed since 2023 and has been sustained through government and other partners support. Over ninety six patients have been operated since then, and we look at increasing the capacity for service provision.

Biography

Dr Simukayi Percy Machawira heads the Cardiothoracic Surgery unit at Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals. He graduated from the University of Zimbabwe in MBChB and MMed Surgery. Dr Machawira went to the University of the Witwatersrand where he attained Fellowship in Cardiothoracic Surgery. He returned to Harare and joined Parirenyatwa Hospital. He has been instrumental in the recommencement of Open Heart Surgery in 2023 at the hospital. He is passionate in a locally sustainable Open Heart Surgery program. He advocates for the program locally, regionally and on the international front. Dr Machawira would like to see the establishment of a center of Excellence and local training of Cardiothoracic surgery specialists.