



In 2010, an estimated 16.9 million lives (32.9% of all deaths worldwide) were lost from conditions needing surgical care. This figure well surpassed the number of deaths from HIV/AIDS (1.46 million), tuberculosis (1.20 million) and malaria (1.17 million) combined. In 2015 the Lancet commission produced a report entitled 'Global Surgery 2030: evidence and solutions for achieving health, welfare, and economic development' which showed that 5 billion of the world's population lack access to safe and affordable surgical care but that appropriate investment in surgery could improve the economic situation in many low income countries and result in economic growth. The then chairman of the World Bank stated that surgery is an indivisible and indispensable part of healthcare. Also in 2015 the World Health Assembly passed a resolution (68.15) which was supported by 194 countries with the aim of strengthening emergency and essential surgical care and anaesthesia as a component of universal health coverage.

In order to address the current deficits in the provision of surgical care at a global level, a number of initiatives need to take place at International, National and local levels. As surgeons, we see that professional collaboration in the field of clinical care, training, teaching and provision of equipment is one way in which we can contribute to the delivery of Article 68.15.

William Harkness, FRCS, and James M. Johnston, Jr., MD, FAANS were introduced to each other at the 2017 American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) Annual Scientific Meeting in Los Angeles amid the meeting theme of Global Neurosurgery. William was an invited speaker at the International Symposium on pediatric neurosurgery in the context of global neurosurgery while Dr. Johnston presented on his work in Vietnam. Through conversations, William and Jim realised that they shared a common interest in wanting to address the problem of a lack of any mechanism to facilitate international collaborations. Additionally, Jim brought to the discussion a recent survey by the Pediatric Section of the AANS and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), both US based organisations, indicating an enthusiasm among members for participating in international collaborations but 40% of respondents cited a lack of any mechanism to establish contact with an appropriate centre as a major discouragement. A further survey, subsequently carried out by William and Jim, of paediatric neurosurgeons and paediatric general surgeons was carried out on a more global scale, looking at the provision of neurosurgery for children and this survey also revealed a real need for a portal by which clinicians could collaborate. On the basis of these studies and a perceived need, the initiative was begun that has resulted in the creation of Intersurgeon.

InterSurgeon is an internet-based social network platform (<https://intersurgeon.org/>) where individual neurosurgeons and neurosurgical centres across the world can connect to create partnerships for clinical treatment, education, training, exchange of personnel, research and donations of equipment. Unlike existing databases maintained by individual surgical organizations (ie AANS, CNS, WFNS, FIENS), it was built as a standalone application that has a map based interface and features that allow profile updates, comment and photo posting and intuitive search functions. The site was constructed to be scalable and easily modified and is currently in Beta phase of development as it is expanded in response to the needs of members and partner organisations.

Upon creating a verified profile, neurosurgeons can create an offer or make a request based on surgical subspecialty (ie tumor, hydrocephalus, vascular, functional, spine, peripheral nerve), training needs, location, and other criteria. Every time another neurosurgeon makes a corresponding offer or request, they can choose to connect with that centre. Interested surgeons may also browse the map-based interface, read about potential partners, and see ongoing collaborations. InterSurgeon is a free service to neurosurgeons and has filed for charitable status in the UK with the charitable intent of advancing surgical healthcare, promoting surgical education and saving lives.

InterSurgeon was launched in April 2018 and is currently enabled only for pediatric neurosurgery. Following a number of email blasts to members of Professional Organisations related to the neurosurgical care of children and presentations at a

number of International surgical forums more than 214 individual pediatric neurosurgeons and neurosurgical departments from over 63 countries have registered, with over 75 collaboration matches made to date. Our website has received over 1,600 visitors with an average session time of over 5 minutes. InterSurgeon was presented at the WHO Initiative for Emergency and Essential Surgery Programme workshop in Geneva during the World Health Assembly in May and has entered discussions with representatives from the G4 Alliance, Global Initiative for Children's Surgery, the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and the American College of Surgeons regarding development of modules specific to other surgical specialities. We are currently in discussion with paediatric surgery, urology, plastic surgery, anaesthesia and ENT. In addition, at the request of the G4Alliance we are exploring a potential mechanism for including NGOs onto the site so that surgeons can also search these also to join established programmes.

We would like to invite BAPS to become an InterSurgeon partner. This would entail the following;-

- BAPS would officially recognize InterSurgeon and endorse InterSurgeon to its members.
- BAPS would create a link to InterSurgeon on the BAPS website.
- InterSurgeon would recognize BAPS on its website and create a link to the BAPS site, as well as a brief explanation of BAPS and its work and a point of contact within the organization for membership enquiries
- BAPS would endorse InterSurgeon by allowing publicity of InterSurgeon at its meetings and through the circulation of newsletters etc

InterSurgeon does not expect any fee for the relationship but if BAPS were able to make a contribution or identify a potential source of funds towards the costs of the site and even perhaps contribute an ongoing sum, then we would be very grateful. However, we would like to stress that this is not a condition of partnership.

William Harkness & James Johnston

Co-Founders of InterSurgeon