

Safety, Service Delivery and Teamwork: A new solution with Syncera

| Perioperative problem | S2 Procedure Performance solution |
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| Competency training is often disjointed or non-existent | Customised, surgeon- and procedure-specific training easily accessible 24/7 online, speeding learning |
| Unknown or poorly recorded surgeon-specific needs | Accurate information on every element of each surgeon's set-up, including a picture of each instrument, where it sits on the tray and what the surgeon calls it |
| Stressful theatre environment, plus increasing workload demands, decrease confidence | A system that supports and educates theatre teams to make routine the mental pathway of how each surgeon operates, imparting self-belief |
| Thousands of instruments have to be counted in and out, cleaned, checked and replaced, leaving the process open to human error | Standardisation removes human error but not humans from the surgical process, creating 'personalised predictability' |

Imagine working in an operating theatre where individual surgical preference was available on every occasion, together with all the consumables required for the procedure, regardless of whether the regular team was present or not. No more 'tatty' procedure cards with illegible amendments, no more trying to figure out which sutures are needed or which approach the surgeon prefers. Imagine the calm and seamless process of teamwork this would create.

Syncera, a digital solution by Smith & Nephew, offers an immediate and sustainable solution to help reduce unwarranted perioperative variation and optimise efficiency.

A demonstration of Syncera S2 Procedure Performance showed me a clear and sustainable product that would benefit patients, surgeons, theatre practitioners, and supplies and procurement services. The system could, in my view, contribute enormously to a proactive and potentially much better environment for patients and staff involved in delivering perioperative services.

“This is the most exciting tool I have seen for some time,”

Mona Guckian Fisher

Specific training needs of theatre teams

Competency training is often disjointed or nonexistent, and surgical units need to increase productivity in a changing healthcare landscape. Safer surgery and happier teams rest on whether hospitals can achieve a culture of effective teamworking.¹⁻³ Standardising operating theatre systems let staff focus on providing the appropriate care and quality service that is required for each individual patient.¹

S2 Procedure Performance's customised, surgeon-specific training helps theatre staff know what is required and when, using scoring, instant feedback and rapid improvement suggestions with real-time metrics. Well-trained, engaged and empowered theatre staff are important to positive patient outcomes.⁴ Training with S2 Procedure Performance helps staff feel fully supported, boosting

their confidence in theatre, which also increases surgeon confidence in staff^{5,6} and undoubtedly decreases stress for everyone.

The learning platform is available 24/7, on any computer, so theatre staff can learn at their convenience. This approach can help reduce training time, increase learning opportunity, and promote self-belief and confidence in learning — particularly for new or unfamiliar procedures, or where there are changes in existing procedures. Users are guided through the setup and order of instruments that will be required. Staff can even see what each surgeon calls each instrument. Knowing that kind of 'special' detail brings a whole extra level of competence to theatre personnel.

Eliminating unwarranted variation is a key to minimising errors and improving outcomes.⁷ Working to specific protocols set by the surgeon in partnership with the theatre specialist means that, as far as anything can

be predictable in this setting, Syncera comes close to providing a 'personalised predictability'.

Potential to lower costs

Based on research carried out by UK organisations and information taken from a Freedom of Information request, we have compiled the costings in **Figure 1** as a guide to approximate costs for a 500-bed NHS hospital.⁸⁻¹² Actual amounts will depend on surgical volumes, average theatre delays in practice, the average sizes of your instrument trays — for example, larger instrument trays will cost more to reprocess (but have a lower per-instrument cost) than smaller trays (which have a higher per-instrument cost). In addition, these costings do not account for outliers such as large, multipiece equipment that is more expensive to reprocess.

S2 Procedure Performance's ability to provide efficient tray inspection and tracking could result in up to 61% fewer instruments required and a 60% reduction in processing costs.⁵ Using the technology to streamline and save on even 10% of these

example costs would represent a significant saving, and make the recovered resources available for other projects within the organisation.

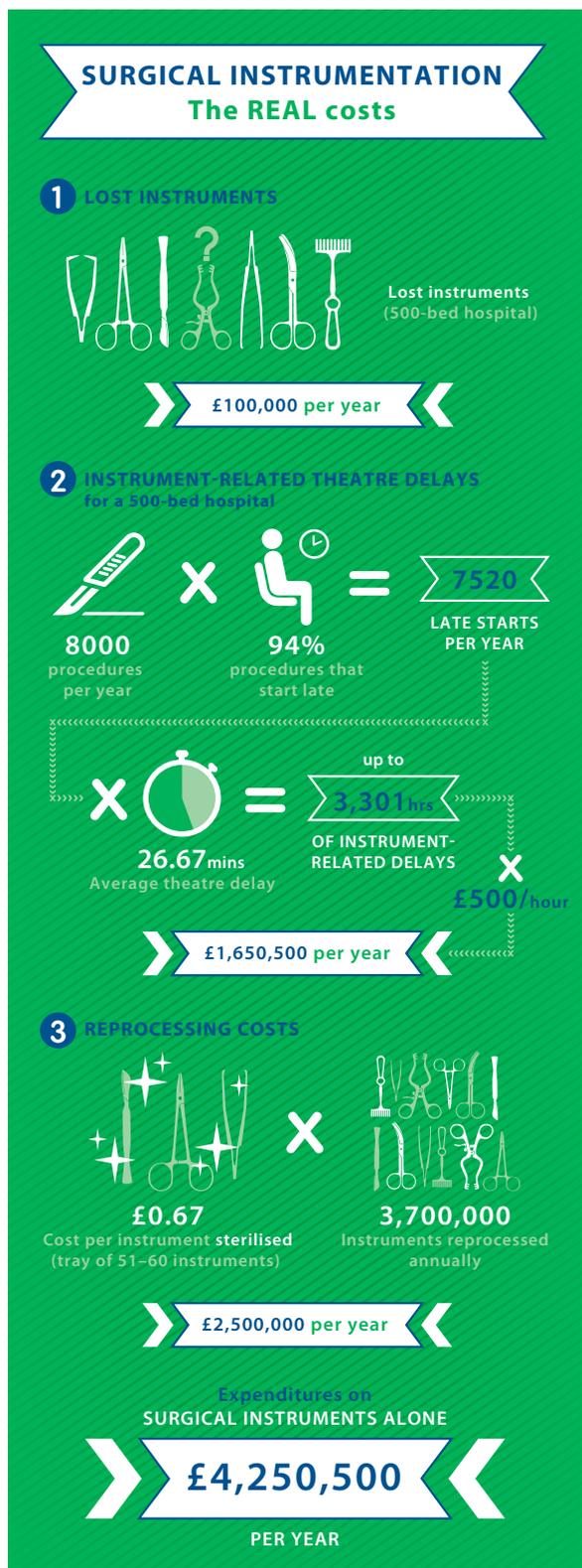
Seamless integration to practice

Syncera offers digital solutions that blend and integrate with routine practices in theatre, becoming part of the workflow and enabling the team to be more efficient and effective. In addition to enhancing teamwork, this seamlessness improves patient safety. Connecting

theatre staff and surgeons via instructional methods aimed at improving team-based knowledge, skills, attitudes and problem-solving could help decrease error rates by up to 19%.¹³

A US-based study by orthopaedic surgeons using a cohort of 1,450 patients found implant-related errors occurred in one in every 20 surgeries.¹⁴ The authors implemented a computer-based e-tracking and compatibility system that standardised implant labelling; confirmed size, side and patient; correct and ensured implant compatibility. The system saved time and effort, and Syncera's automated point-of-care hip and knee replacement validation checker caught potential errors and reduced waste by 85%. It also mitigates the risk of component-size mismatches such as head and cup implantation, which are 'never events' and 'near miss' incidents.¹⁴

Figure 1



It is important to note that there are no barriers to using S2 Procedure Performance alongside other systems already in existence. It doesn't need to be integrated with any NHS IT system; all that's needed is the internet and a web browser.

Exceptional potential

Of course, nothing is ever foolproof, and all systems are only as functional as those who operate them. We must never lose sight in applying the basics of general enquiry and common sense. I can see, though, that Syncera's S2 Procedure Performance does certainly have the potential to make theatres better organised and standardised, so that procedures can flow more smoothly and safely. This is the most exciting tool I have seen for some time, and I hope that before long I will have the opportunity to see it in practice. S2 Procedure Performance is a powerful and simple education tool and a great resource for standardisation and supporting staff in the perioperative environment.

Note

Abridged version of an article by Mona Guckian Fisher in the *Journal for Perioperative Practice Procurement Guide 2016*;5(6): [in press]. Ms. Guckian Fisher has no conflicts of interest in reviewing S2 Procedure Performance.

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