



AP001

Paediatric Cardiology & Congenital Heart Disease • Poster Presentation

PERCEIVED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING OPEN-HEART SURGERY SKILLS AMONG PERIOPERATIVE NURSES AT A TEACHING HOSPITAL IN NIGERIA.

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Stand: POSTER #AP001 | **Venue:** Poster Exhibition Hall & Gallery - Eko Convention Centre | **Online Ref:** <https://nigeriancardiacsociety.com/abstracts/AP001>

Background Nigeria faces a severe shortage of specialized cardiac surgical capacity, and the scarcity of perioperative nurses trained in open-heart procedures remains a major constraint on surgical outcomes for children with congenital heart disease. Structured training pathways for cardiac theatre nursing are largely absent in the region. This study assessed perioperative nurses' perceived strategies for advancing and enhancing open-heart surgery skills at Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex (OAUTHC), Ile-Ife, Nigeria. **Methodology** A descriptive cross-sectional design was adopted. Twenty perioperative nurses were selected from a population of fifty in the main theatre using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire, which was face-validated by experts in cardiothoracic surgery and perioperative nursing, and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations). **Results** Respondents perceived specialized training workshops and continuing professional development as the most effective strategies for skill enhancement (85%), while 75% affirmed the value of mentorship from experienced cardiac theatre nurses and surgeons. In addition, 78% emphasized the need for institutional support, including sponsorship for advanced cardiac nursing courses and international exposure programmes. Inadequate access to structured cardiac-specific training was identified as a key barrier to competency development.

Conclusion Enhancing open-heart surgery competencies among perioperative nurses requires a multifaceted approach combining continuous education, mentorship, and multidisciplinary collaboration, underpinned by strong institutional support. Investment in structured cardiac nursing training pathways at OAUTHC and similar Nigerian centres could strengthen nursing expertise and improve surgical outcomes and quality of care for children with congenital heart disease.

Keywords: Cardiac surgical nursing; competency development; mentorship; sub-Saharan Africa.