

MEDIA RELEASE

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ACN collaboration with Ugandan nurses and midwives

Mothers in Uganda will benefit from safer, higher-quality care during childbirth, thanks to a local initiative supported by the Australian College of Nursing (ACN).

As part of the ODENNA Africa Project, led by the International Council of Nurses (ICN), ACN is mentoring and sharing knowledge with the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Union (UNMU) to improve care for mothers undergoing caesarean sections (C-sections) by implementing best practice guidelines.

The project will focus on assessing the quality of care provided to mothers, evaluating the knowledge of health workers, and implementing best practice guidelines to reduce infection rates and improve recovery after C-sections.

ACN CEO, Professor Kathryn Zeitz FACN, said that all mothers deserve access to safe care during one of the most important times of their lives.

“Nurses and midwives are often the first, and sometimes the only, health professional mothers can rely on during and after childbirth,” Prof Zeitz said.

“Our role is to provide advice and mentoring to strengthen the project and assist the local team to influence funders, improve data collection, and increase uptake of protocols across Uganda.

“Nurses and midwives play a crucial role in providing care before, during, and after C-sections to help reduce infections and support a safe recovery for mothers and babies.

“By sharing knowledge and skills, ACN is contributing to reducing preventable maternal deaths, so that fewer children are left without their mothers.

“We’re proud of our global reach and the opportunity to collaborate with local nurses and midwives to make a lasting difference for mothers in Uganda.”

Background

Uganda currently lacks a formal protocol for C-section care that follows WHO guidelines, which leads to high rates of post-operative infections. On average, 10 out of 200 mothers who undergo C-sections each

month are readmitted with severe infections, many requiring further treatment. The absence of proper care standards puts mothers at significant risk, and the need for improved healthcare practices is urgent.

In addition to medical risks, mothers in Uganda face significant personal and financial burdens. Many must travel long distances to referral hospitals, often struggling to cover transportation costs. Once they arrive, the costs continue, as they may need to pay for antibiotics and other essential medications out-of-pocket when hospitals run out of stock. This further adds to the already heavy financial strain on families.

ODENNA is an International Council of Nurses (ICN) project designed as a next-level assessment, leadership, and mentorship program for national nursing associations wanting to increase their influence, sustainability, and advocacy to meet ever-escalating demands.

Australian College of Nursing

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) provides a unifying voice for nursing in Australia by bringing together nurses from all States and Territories, healthcare settings, and specialties to advance the profession and enhance healthcare delivery. ACN actively addresses critical issues in health care and nursing, by advocating for change with key influencers to improve health services and outcomes nationwide. At ACN, we believe that every nurse has the potential to lead and make a significant impact. Our members are at the heart of our mission—they are leaders, educators, and researchers who inspire and enact real change in the nursing field. We support our members through advocacy, education, and a powerful professional network to provide quality care and improve the health of all Australians.

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