

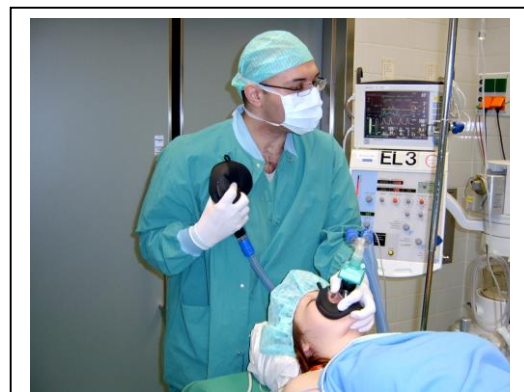


## Fact Sheet: The Roles of the Anaesthesiologist

Anaesthesiologists are specialist medical doctors who have undertaken additional training, usually over several years, in all forms of anaesthesia. While they are best known for administering the anaesthetics that are essential to safe surgery, anaesthesiologists are also involved with the care of the patient before and after surgery. They therefore have the potential to influence multiple steps in the patient pathway; perhaps more than any other doctor in a health care setting. For this reason anaesthesiologists are leaders in the quality and safety of health care and have an important impact on patient outcomes.

The varied roles of the anaesthesiologist include:

- Anaesthesia care during surgery
- Medical care before and after surgery (perioperative physician role)
- Resuscitation
- Intensive care and critical emergency medicine
- Transport of the critically ill
- Clinical management and leadership
- Research and teaching
- Pain medicine, including the management of post-operative pain, other types of acute pain, chronic pain and cancer pain
- Specialist anaesthesia for children, obstetrics, neurosurgery and cardiothoracic surgery
- Sedation and anaesthesia for patients undergoing procedures outside the operating theatre, for example, special X-ray procedures



Safe anaesthesia is dependent upon equipment, drugs and trained providers.

Anaesthesiologists often occupy senior roles in hospitals due to their ability to see the “whole picture” in relation to the care of the individual or management of a hospital, as well as their team skills.

*Globally, people are suffering because of a lack of access to safe anaesthesia and surgery. This includes access to procedures that are often straightforward and cost effective, such as those used to treat:*

- Obstetric complications - especially obstructed labour
- Traumatic injuries – especially compound fractures
- Acute abdominal emergencies - such as appendicitis
- Common conditions - such as hernia, cataract, clubfoot, cleft lip and palate

**WFSA recommends that health programmes give priority to strengthening anaesthesia and surgery for these and other conditions.**

**Safe anaesthesia is essential for safe surgery**