

18 August 2020

COVID-Surgery Prioritisation Score

As Facility and Patient Guide for Non-Emergency Surgery During COVID-19 Pandemic.

Dear Colleagues

The Covid 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the care of the surgical patient. In most hospitals “elective surgery” has been cancelled and in others the emergence of the concept of “essential surgery” has facilitated the ongoing performance of surgery for pathologies such as cancer. This impact has not been uniform across the country nor within the public and private sectors.

In recognition of the need to guide surgical practice in South Africa in relation to COVID-19, the National Department of Health established a Technical Working Group on COVID-19 and Surgery. This multidisciplinary team of peri-operative clinicians (surgeons, anaesthetists and obstetricians) has worked together to develop an approach to the re-introduction of surgical care and the prioritisation of non-emergency operative cases.

This Technical Working Group reviewed national and international guidelines and protocols on surgery during COVID-19. We then modified the original MeNTS (Medically Necessary Time Sensitive Procedures) score by contextualising it to the South African health care environment, and have further developed a simple set of parameters to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the resources of a health facility.

The outcome of this process is here attached as the **COVID-Surgery Prioritisation Score** as a **Facility and Patient Guide for Non-Emergency Surgery During COVID-19.**

Given the rapidly evolving public health scenarios related to the Pandemic, we propose that this guide is used as a working document for clinicians in the South African context. We encourage you to begin using this Score and, where necessary, to give feedback to this Technical Working Group to further refine the guidance. The feedback can be sent to any member of the working group as listed below.

Thanking you in advance for your contribution

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