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# ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Addressing the global burden of surgical disease

**Tuesday 25 September, 2012**

Surgeons, anaesthetists and public health specialists from around the world will gather in Melbourne this week to explore and evaluate the role of surgery in efforts to improve global health, respond to disasters and alleviate disease.

This is the third International Medical Development Symposium hosted by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. This year's meeting is held in collaboration with the Australian Society of Anaesthetists, the International Society for Surgery and a Harvard-based humanitarian surgery initiative, the Alliance for Surgery and Anaesthesia Presence.

With the theme "The Global Burden of Surgical Disease", the symposium is aimed at surgeons, anaesthetists and other specialists, donors and policy makers. It will feature speakers from nations as diverse as the United States, Tonga, Indonesia and Cuba.

Symposium convenor, Professor David Watters, said sessions on the first day would examine the burden of surgical disease in developing countries.

"This encompasses issues such as the impact of surgery and anaesthesia on global health, the importance of health policy, health economics and aid effectiveness, and the crucial role of trauma and disaster response," Professor Watters said. "Significantly, one session will address diseases that are increasingly being seen in developing countries – cardiovascular disease and cancer – and efforts to address these."

The second day of the symposium will focus on strategies to respond to and reduce the global burden of surgical disease. The emphasis will be on aid programs that have been proven to work, on training and sustaining the health workforce in developing countries, and on global strategies and partnerships.

Professor Watters said speakers included leading health professionals from countries in which the College had traditionally worked to build capacity, including several smaller Pacific Island nations. "These speakers are ideally placed to identify what has and hasn't worked over the years and their views can inform future aid projects."

"We are also delighted to welcome senior surgeons and public health experts from major universities in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Fiji who will provide a global perspective on the burden of disease, injury, and unmet humanitarian need," he said.

The symposium runs from 27 to 28 September at the College's Melbourne headquarters. The program can be read at

[http://www.surgeons.org/media/10430197/global\\_burden\\_of\\_surgical\\_disease\\_flyer\\_program.pdf](http://www.surgeons.org/media/10430197/global_burden_of_surgical_disease_flyer_program.pdf)

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