

Cost benefit analysis of the surgical safety checklist



What we were asked to do	<p>Our client asked us to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the systematic use of the World Health Organisation's surgical safety checklist in New Zealand. A lack of readily available information on the current use of the checklist meant that some estimation would be required.</p>
How we approached the project	<p>We reviewed the international literature on surgical safety checklists to identify the issues. This helped us develop a simple framework for analysing potential costs and benefits. We then drew on a number of methods to establish and cross-check plausible ranges for key variables. Those methods included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examining the results of peer-reviewed clinical studies• Obtaining and analysing local data on hospital admissions and compensation claims, and• Interviewing sector experts, including hospital staff responsible for quality and safety.
Our findings	<p>Our overall conclusion is that there is scope to make more consistent use of the surgical safety checklist within the New Zealand health system and that the cost of this intervention is likely to be low. We found that systematic use of the checklist is likely to lead to a net financial benefit to the publicly-funded health system under all credible assumptions examined. Our base case scenario suggested that the system would be \$43 million better off over a ten-year period.</p> <p><i>continued over</i></p>

Our findings	The financial benefits would arise primarily from reduced hospital costs from avoided complications of surgical care. Such additional costs can take the form of a longer length of stay and additional surgical or medical procedures in response to an adverse event. Avoiding these costs may not result in immediately bankable savings, but would free up resources to be used for treating other patients.
Read the final report	publications.srgexpert.com