



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

The Royal College of Pathologists' winning entry was a laboratory training programme, designed to build capacity and improve the standards and quality of pathology diagnostic and laboratory medicine services in sub-Saharan Africa through skills training, knowledge transfer, leadership development and mentoring.

The project, LabSkills Africa, was a multilevel partnership with: the British Division of the International Academy of Pathology; the College of Pathologists of East, Central and Southern Africa; the East, Central and Southern African Health Community; as well as country partners in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi and Stellenbosch University in South Africa also worked with the college to develop and implement a curriculum and training programme.

The initiative was piloted in 20 public-sector laboratories in five countries between 2013 and 2015, creating 100 trained laboratory healthcare professionals and leading to improvements in the quality and accuracy of diagnostic tests and the professional relationship between pathologists, scientists and technologists.

Furthermore, 70 per cent of the laboratories reduced their turnaround times by an average of 20 per cent, while a foundation for the development of a regional laboratory improvement network has been established.

There are already plans to implement the model in Nigeria, South Sudan and Myanmar.

The judges said the collaboration was "inspiring" and the project has "already made a difference to a population of more than 110 million people, improving the quality of laboratories to improve mortality rates and provide better treatment".