

Prof. Koffi Herve Yangni-Angate: open heart surgery in Africa

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Professor Koffi Herve Yangni-Angate (*Figure 1*) is a cardio-vascular and thoracic surgeon, the past director of the University College of Korhogo and the Chairman of the cardiovascular and thoracic department at Bouake University and at Bouake Teaching Hospital. Prof. Yangni-Angate is also the founding father of the World Society for pediatric and congenital heart surgery, the African Association of Thoracic and Cardio-Vascular Surgeons, and the African Society of Morphology. He completed his residency in general surgery and thoracic and cardiovascular surgery at Abidjan University Medical School. He trained in pediatric cardiovascular surgery at Saint Justine Hospital in Montreal, Canada.

During the 2015 American College of Surgeons (ACS) Clinical Congress, in Chicago, Prof. Yangni-Angate gave the “Distinguished Lecture of the International Society of Surgery” entitled: “Challenges of Open Heart Surgery in Africa: Cote d’Ivoire experience”. After the lecture, we invited Prof. Yangni-Angate for an interview to talk more about the situation of open heart surgery in Africa and the contribution of his team.

CDT: *Could you introduce the history of the open heart surgery in Cote d’Ivoire?*

Prof. Yangni-Angate: In Cote d’Ivoire, open heart surgery has been performed since 1978 and its history is not too long. Since then, we keep doing this surgery. We have many patients now with different heart diseases. They need to open heart surgery, including valve repair and valve replacement.

CDT: *What is the current status of open heart surgery in Africa?*

Prof. Yangni-Angate: Open heart surgery is very important in Africa. Without such surgery, many patients with heart diseases will die. But open heart surgery is not performed as a basic surgery for people because it is too expensive for most patients in Cote d’Ivoire and many other



Figure 1 Professor Koffi Herve Yangni-Angate.

African countries. We have to get more people covered by health insurance to help them have a chance to undergo open heart surgery. This is a challenge for Africa.

In Cote d’Ivoire, a national health insurance has been set. With the help of that, more patients have a chance to undergo open heart surgery and be treated. In addition, the mortality after open heart surgery in Cote d’Ivoire is less than 8%. Compared with other countries in the world, it is satisfying.

CDT: *In your opinion, what are the challenges of performing open heart surgery in Africa?*

Prof. Yangni-Angate: As we just mentioned there is a massive amount of patients with heart diseases who require open heart surgery, but only few of them could afford to have this surgery. So a major challenge is to improve the health insurance. Another challenge is the lack of cardiac centers equipped to perform open heart surgery. Currently, the number of such centers in Africa is not enough. We

still need more. And when looking at the map, you will find that the distribution of cardiac centers is uneven in Africa. Therefore, more cardiac centers needed to be built in the future.

CDT: *We know that you have done a lot of work to improve open heart surgery in Africa. Could you give a brief introduction of these programs?*

Prof. Yangni-Angate: Firstly, I proposed some initiatives about open heart surgery to seek support from government. And finally the government approved to build more cardiac centers. Secondly, I have been involved in many training programs for cardiac surgery in Africa. I also endeavor to get cardiac surgeons to meet, cooperate and exchange their professional experience in order to figure out how to improve cardiac surgery, such as organizing international meeting. Besides, we try our best to promote cardiac

surgery in Africa through journals such as *African Annals of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery* and websites. We move step by step and everything is in progress.

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Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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