



Medical professionals exchanging views during the 54th PNG Medical Symposium in Port Moresby yesterday.
— Nationalpic by LYPENSON SOWENI

Investment in surgery crucial

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By Moya Nina Iowa

Surgery is an indispensable part of any healthcare system, and without investment, there can be no universal access to essential medical care, a senior professor in surgery says.

Prof David Watters, from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, said this while presenting the Global Surgery 2030 report of the Lancet Commission on Global Surgery during the second day of the 53rd medical symposium held at The Stanley Hotel in Port Moresby yesterday.

“Surgery and anaesthetics are vital components of medical care which need serious investment,” Watters said.

“They are important investments for low- to middle-income countries (LMIC) where access to these services are poor.”

The report said that treatment for surgical conditions, which represent about 30 per cent of the global burden of disease, was unreachable for the majority of the world’s population, which resulted in loss of life and reduced welfare for millions of people, stunting the economic development of countries.

“Lack of investment in these (two) priority areas is a major barrier to national economic growth, productivity and improved human welfare,” Watters said.

The report called for LMIC governments to develop health plans that included affordable and easy access to surgical and anaesthetic care.

“This is a task not only for governments. It is a task that global health and development organisations must target and monitor to ensure that the funding they provide contributes to the overall achievement of their mission,” Watters said.

He said that there was a global consensus to see the UN Sustainable Development Goals succeed and investment in health was good for the economy.