

GENEVA FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction



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www.gfmer.ch

Villa Grand-Montfleury. Chemin du Grand-Montfleury 48, 1290 Versoix – CH

Tel. ++41 22 346 77 16 Fax : ++41 22 346 78 34

E-mail : info@gfmer.org - Website: <http://www.gfmer.ch>

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Preface by the president

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) as WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction, in partnership with WHO and other partner institutions has been organizing a postgraduate training course on sexual and reproductive health research since 2003 in Geneva, where participate professionals from different countries. At the start of 2009, the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research has provided training in sexual and reproductive health research to over 500 health care providers from different countries.

Moreover the foundation has disseminated this training to collaborating centers through the pool of participants of the course in Geneva, who act as local teachers, using similar training materials. Training courses have been organized in Afghanistan, Argentina, Cameroon, China, Indonesia, Laos, and Romania. Through this network established by GFMER the participants of this training course collaborate with the foundation and among themselves for the exchange of information on training and research in their respective countries.

In addition to the state-of-the-art website at GFMER, an online learning system including teleconferencing, in parallel to the regular web pages has been made available. This tool assists in the management of course resources (discussion forum, web resources, PDF/PowerPoint files etc.) that accompany the other web pages of the Foundation.

Our programs aim to address a wider range of contemporary reproductive and sexual health problems, especially in developing countries, in-order to build the capacity of health care professionals, which in turn contribute in improving the health status of populations.

GFMER has built a strong partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations for the exchange of information and expertise at international level, where it plays the role of resource centre in terms of training and research. The website of the foundation knows an enormous success, as it attracts more than 10,000 visitors per day. We continue our efforts to make this website more and more rich in information resources for health professionals.

GFMER has been continuously reviewing its operations in-order to broaden and diversify its spectrum. To achieve this goal the foundation is exploring the possibility of partnership with other sponsors, such as multilateral, bilateral donors and private foundations.

We believe our efforts to assist the countries and programs give us the opportunity to contribute in improving the reproductive and sexual health status of the populations in need.



Prof. Aldo Campana

The President

Mission

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) is a non-profit organization, cosponsored by the Department of Health of the Canton of Geneva, the Department of Social Affairs of the City of Geneva and works in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). It aims at mobilizing resources, both technical and financial, from the public and private sectors. GFMER is a WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction.

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research has a mandate to address challenges, such as:

- The conduct of training programmes in Geneva, covering research methodology, epidemiology, reproductive and sexual health, and other medical areas.
- The dissemination of the Geneva training courses in other countries.
- The initiation and provision of support for researchers to plan, conduct and publish their scientific work.
- The dissemination of medical information on Internet.
- The development of clinical guidelines for use in clinical training programmes.

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research capitalizes on many years of experience and activities of the WHO Collaborating Centre in Human Reproduction, Geneva.

Objectives

The overall objectives are to:

- provide health education programmes and research to developing countries and countries in economic transition.
- establish collaboration between entities from the public and private sectors.

WHO collaborating centre in education and research in human reproduction

Terms of reference:

- To provide a postgraduate training in research methodology in Reproductive Health.
- To develop & conduct research & research synthesis activities.
- To assist partner institutions in the conduct of postgraduate medical education programs.
- To collaborate with WHO on e-learning activities as well as on the conduct of short postgraduate courses in epidemiology.
- To provide expertise to WHO or to centers of WHO's network requesting collaboration in research, research training or clinical aspects in human reproduction.

Training courses and research

Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research: 2 February – 4 March 2009, Geneva



The objectives of this training programme are to:

- strengthen the research capabilities of the participants and through this, the research capacity of their respective institutions
- acquaint the participants with the most recent technological advances in sexual and reproductive health and conduct a critical appraisal of the supporting scientific evidence
- enable the participants to identify and address priority areas in sexual and reproductive health
- provide skills in research methodology and scientific writing to allow the participants to initiate research and/or participate in research work appropriate to the health programmes in his or her home country

In 2009 a total of twenty eight health professional from 20 different countries attended the training course on Research methodology in Reproductive Health/Sexual Health conducted at the Headquarters of World Health Organization, Geneva. This 5-week annual course has been jointly conducted with the Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization (RHR/WHO), the International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health (IAMANEH), and the San Raffaele del Monte Tabor Foundation.

At the end of this course the participants presented research projects appropriate to their settings and health problems requiring further research.

The following link provides detail information about the course, participants and their countries of origin:

http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/PGC_SRH_2009/SRH_Lectureplan_2009.htm

http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/PGC_SRH_2009/Participants_SRH_2009.htm



Training Course in Reproductive Health Research: September 2009 - February 2010, Lao People Democratic Republic

GFMER in collaboration with Laotian Health Ministry, National Institute of Public Health (NIOPH), National Centre for Maternal and Child Health (NCMCH), World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Fund for Population and Development (UNFPA) has started a training course on Reproductive Health Research in Democratic Republic of Lao, which is similar to the course held Geneva, but adapted to the Laotian context.



The course was launched on September 2009, with duration of six weeks conducted in several blocks, where participate a total of 15 health professionals.

For further information about this program, please consult the following link:

http://www.gfmer.ch/Activites_internationales_Fr/Laos/Laos_2009_lecture_plan.htm

Clinical Training, Prevention and Treatment of Obstetric Fistula

Each year between 50 000 to 100 000 women worldwide are affected by obstetric fistula, a hole in the birth canal. Women who experience obstetric fistula suffer constant incontinence, shame, social segregation and health problems. It is estimated that more than 2 million young women live with untreated obstetric fistula in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa

GFMER is partner in the UNFPA/WHO '**Campaign to end fistula**'. The aim is to create a 'Centre of Excellence for the prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula' in Northern Benin, which would serve other countries in the region under the name the "**Tanguieta Model**". This programme is supported by the Ville de Genève, Esperanza Foundation, Ambra Foundation and private donators, and is conducted in collaboration with WHO and UNFPA.

The objectives of the project are:

- Training local specialists in fistula repair

- Raising awareness about prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula
- Development of research programs

During 2009 several missions were conducted to different African countries where Dr. Charles-Henry Rochat the overall responsible of fistula project with his group of specialists trained local doctors and operated a total 349 fistula cases.

The table below shows the location of hospitals and the number of patients operated during 2009:

Hospital	Country	No of fistula cases operated
Hôpital St-Jean de Dieu de Tanguiéta	Benin	110
Hôpital de Ouagadougou	Burkina Faso	18
Hôpital de Fada NGourma	Burkina Faso	16
Hôpital Central de Yaoundé	Cameroun	13
Hôpital de Kissidougou	Guinée	58
Hôpital de Manambaro	Madagascar	14
Hôpital Abéché	Tchad	120
Total		349

http://www.gfmer.ch/Presentations_Fr/Fistules_obstetricales.htm

http://www.gfmer.ch/Activites_internationales_Fr/Rapport_2009_fistules_obstetricales_Rochat.htm

Teaching Evidence-based Medicine in Postgraduates – WHO RHL Evidence-based Medicine Course

GFMER continues its collaboration in a multicenter, international trial to evaluate novel teaching and learning techniques for postgraduate and continued medical education. The trial compares a learner-centred, problem-based, e-learning course with clinical activities in the workplace to traditional lectures to teach evidence-based medicine. When successfully implemented, the course is designed to provide just-in-time learning through on-the-job-training, with the potential for teaching and learning to directly impact on clinical practice without increasing the burden on staff, especially in already busy clinical centres.

The trial is conducted in collaboration with WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research and Birmingham University, UK, WHO Collaborating Centre in Research Synthesis. The partners in this trial are University institutions in Argentina, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Philippines, South Africa and Thailand.

GFMER is responsible for the overall development and coordination of the trial and the electronic data handling.

The aim is to disseminate the course to a larger audience, to other countries and settings. The clinically integrated e-learning approach can be scaled up without major investment at teaching institutions worldwide.

Publications, edition

Reproductive Health - The Official Journal of the Foundation

GFMER hosts the editorial seat of the specialist journal *Reproductive Health*. In 2009, a total of 23 scientific articles were published. *Reproductive Health* is an open-access, peer reviewed, online specialist journal, with its content freely and universally available. GFMER aims to encourage especially researchers from low - and middle income settings to submit their research findings and making them available to a wider audience. The submission and peer review process are done electronically, thus allowing swifter publication.

Below is the link provides the access to the articles published in Reproductive health journal of GFMER:

<http://www.reproductive-health-journal.com/home/>

Website

<http://www.gfmer.ch>



The GFMER website is extensive, regularly updated and provides easy access to useful information.

The website contains information about the foundation, education programs (courses), partners, international collaboration, information resources, such as publications, presentations, books, atlases, databases.

Moreover the website provides link to various education and research institutions free medical journals, medical schools, dictionaries, search engines, medical images, guidelines and free full text articles.

The website of the foundation contains information in English, French, German Italian and Spanish.

For the year 2009, the website received more than 10000 visits per day.

Informatics

The development of a new online learning tool was initiated (modelling and first implementation) for the Reproductive Health Library (RHL)-EBM Evidence-Based Medicine

Course. This is a pilot development in the use of the Ruby development language and the Rails architecture to help speed the process of future database application development in other GFMER projects. The application contains a number of streaming videos accessible via the website converted to the more modern 'Flash' (FLV) format at GFMER. The data collection for this project is entirely online. Data management and storage is hosted at GFMER.

In addition, GFMER has developed online data entry platforms for studies on obstetric fistula and prostatic cancer. All data are maintained and stored at the GFMER website.

International activities and collaborations

GFMER is partner with the following national and international institutions:

- [Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores en Reproducción Humana \(ALIRH\)](#)
- [Bangladesh Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health \(BAMANEH\)](#)
- [Cameroon-Geneva Health Foundation](#)
- [Centro Rosarino de Estudios Perinatales](#)
- [Centro universitario per la cooperazione internazionale - Università degli studi di Parma](#)
- [Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization](#)
- [Effective Care Research Unit - East London Hospital Complex, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa](#)
- [Egyptian Society of Maternal and Neonatal Health \(ESMANEH\)](#)
- [European Group of Robotic Urology / Groupe Européen de Robotique en Urologie](#)
- [Faculté des Sciences Médicales de Vientiane](#)
- [FValse - Franco Vietnamese Association for Liver Studies and Education](#)
- [Global Voices Survey for Maternal Health - University of Oxford](#)
- [Hôpital St. Jean de Dieu - Tanguiéta, Bénin](#)
- [Institut de la Francophonie pour la Médecine Tropicale, Vientiane](#)
- [Institut National de Santé Publique, Vientiane](#)
- [International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health \(IAMANEH\)](#)
- [International Center for Limb Salvage](#)
- [International Network on Control of Gynaecological Cancers \(INCGC\)](#)
- [Ministère de la Santé, RDP Lao](#)
- [National Center for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Lahore, Pakistan](#)
- [Perinatal Education Programme - Groote Schuur, South Africa](#)
- [San Raffaele del Monte Tabor Foundation](#)
- [Service de gynécologie et obstétrique de l'Hôpital Provincial de Maroua, Cameroun](#)
- [Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Bénin](#)
- [Université du Burundi](#)
- [ZimHealth / Zimbabwe Network for Health - Europe](#)

Foundation membership

GFMER provides the opportunity for health professionals interested in collaborating with the foundation to apply for membership.

Till now a total of 257 personal pages for members from 70 different Countries have been created on the GFMER website.

For more information about this part of activities please consult the following link:

http://www.gfmer.ch/International_activities_En/GFMER_members_pages.htm

Forthcoming issues, plan for 2010

For 2010, GFMER, WHO and other partners are planning to offer a distance training course by combining their experience in the provision of physical training and online learning system. It aims to provide a cadre of health practitioners with knowledge, skills and competencies in sexual and reproductive health as well as research in this field, especially for those health care providers, whose access to learning is limited by time, financial resource or other constraints and where access to quality education and learning in the field of reproductive health is limited. An appropriate package of training, which will meet needs of health care providers in many countries will be adapted and will be labeled as “From Research to Practice: Training in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research”. With this training program, participants will learn from first hand health experiences in day to day demands and through longer term challenges in the field of sexual and reproductive health and research. The program will be designed to address a wider range of contemporary reproductive and sexual health problems, especially in developing countries. It will be developed with the collaboration of experts from WHO, GFMER and other national and international health infrastructures and health training institutions.