

GENEVA FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction



ANNUAL REPORT 2010

www.gfmer.ch

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Preface by the president..... | 3 |
| Mission..... | 4 |
| Objectives | 4 |
| GFMER main fields of activities..... | 5 |
| 1. Training courses and research | 5 |
| 1.1. From research to practice: Training course in sexual and reproductive health research | 5 |
| 1.2. Clinical training, prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula | 8 |
| 1.3. Training course in reproductive health research: September 2009 - February 2010, Lao People Democratic Republic | 11 |
| 2. Publications, website | 12 |
| 2.1. Reproductive Health - The official journal of the Foundation | 12 |
| 2.2. Website (www.gfmer.ch)..... | 12 |
| 3. Informatics | 13 |
| 4. Foundation membership..... | 14 |

Preface by the president

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) is a non-profit organisation established in 2002. It is supported by the Department of Health of the Canton of Geneva and the Department of Social Affairs of the City of Geneva, and works in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). GFMER is a WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction.

In 2010 the foundation and its partners launched a distance training / online course on sexual and reproductive health research. The majority of the participants of this course were health care providers, whose access to learning is limited by time, financial resource or other constraints and from where access to quality education and learning in the field of reproductive health is limited. A total of 149 health professionals from 48 countries attended this training program in 2010.

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.

Our fistula program is clearly recognized at an international level (training, treatment, prevention and research in the field of obstetric fistula).

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 has attracted 3,280,375 visitors from 231 countries in 2010. 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 collaboration with the UNFPA program to end obstetric fistula.

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.

As WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction, the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research is involved in the following activities:

- 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.

GFMER main fields of activities

1. Training courses and research

1.1. From research to practice: Training course in sexual and reproductive health research



The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) in partnership with WHO and other partner institutions has been organizing a postgraduate training course on sexual and reproductive health with a special focus on research methodology since 2003 at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, with the participation of health professionals from different countries. Moreover the foundation has disseminated this training in Afghanistan, Argentina, Cameroon, China, Laos, Indonesia, and Romania through the pool of participants of the course in Geneva.

In 2010, GFMER and its partners launched a distance training / online course by combining their experience in the provision of health education and online lectures and seminars. With this project the foundation provides 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, adapted to the needs of health care providers in many countries has been developed to allow the course participants to learn from first hand health experiences in day to day demands and through longer term challenges in the field of sexual and reproductive health. The program

was designed to address a wider range of contemporary reproductive and sexual health problems, especially in developing countries.

Course Participants

<http://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2010/participants.htm>

A total of 147 health professionals from 48 countries were enrolled in the training program for 2010. The majority of them were from developing countries.

Teachers, partner institutions

<http://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2010/Teachers.htm>

A total of 43 teachers from World Health Organization, Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research and 12 other national and international institutions were involved to assist in teaching and tutorship for this course. Below is the list of partner institutions:

- College of Medicine University of Duhok
- Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research
- Geneva University Hospital
- Human Genetics & Genome Research Division National Research Centre, Cairo
- Molecular Genetics Thalassaemia Department, The Cyprus Institute of Neurology & Genetics
- National Coalition for Health Professional Education in Genetics
- National Society of Genetic Counselors
- San Raffaele Hospital, Milan
- Swiss Federal Office of Public Health
- University of Oxford
- VU University Medical Center Amsterdam
- WHO Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development
- WHO Department of Essential Health Technologies
- WHO Department of Gender, Women and Health
- WHO Department of HIV/AIDS
- WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research
- WHO Library & Information Networks for Knowledge
- WHO Research Policy and Cooperation

1.1.1. Course contents

<http://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2010/Course-modules.htm>

- Maternal and Perinatal Health
- Sexually Transmitted Infections & HIV/AIDS
- Sexual Health with a special focus on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Community Genetics

The above-mentioned modules were supplemented by a core module on research methods as well as selective lectures on Gender issues, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), obstetric Fistula and other topics related to sexual and reproductive health. The contents of each module were based on the reality of situation and were addressing the current problems and challenges in the field of sexual and reproductive health research.

1.1.2. Teaching methods

<http://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2010/Course-guide.htm>

Teaching methods consisted of on-line lectures (live, recorded and didactic presentations), key readings, practice materials, additional readings and referrals to related websites. It is worth mentioning that in terms of documentation and published teaching resources, this course is one of the richest in the world.

For each module students were receiving assignment from course organizers. This helped the students to become more familiar in scientific reading and writing and applying the knowledge acquired in their day-to-day professional practice.

In-order to assure the smooth running of the course, to provide access to academic and administrative support, assure the interaction within the participants in one hand the participants and the course organizers on the other hand an on-line environment has been created. The diversity within the students' community and the networking facilitated by the programme provided a wonderful opportunity to learn from and share experiences with peers from different countries.

1.1.3. Final evaluation

In order to obtain the certificate, participants were required to fulfill:

- A bibliographic review on a topic of their interest or a project, under the guidance of a tutor.
- Moreover, during the course, participants are required to write a scientific paper which contributed to their final assessment at the end of the course.

Throughout the course, participants were constantly receiving advice from modules coordinators, the coordinator of the course, concerned teachers or tutors of their choice. The aim was to guide participants in preparing scientific papers that would lead to a publication in a peer reviewed journal.

1.1.4. Intensive training course in Geneva

A total of 15 best students, with a relevant research projects, are invited to Geneva between 13-17 June 2011 to attend an intensive training course which will be organized in WHO headquarters. This will give these students the opportunity to work more on their research projects and to get in contact with WHO and other partners' resource persons.

1.2. Clinical training, prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula



Charles-Henry Rochat, MD

http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/Rochat-obstetric-fistula.htm

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

Each year between 50 000 to 100 000 women worldwide are affected by obstetric fistula, a hole in the birth canal due to delayed or impaired access for a caesarian section. 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 involved in different countries as Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Madagascar, Cameroon and Mali. More specifically we have developed in Northern Benin a training center in collaboration with the FSS (Faculty of Science of Cotonou), UNFPA, the French association AFOA and the Minister of Health. We have developed the "Tanguieta Model" which incorporates treatment, training, prevention, social reintegration and research. In Benin we work in partnership with NGOs for recruitment and follow-up (ESSOR, Sentinelles)

GFMER is partner in the UNFPA/WHO '**Campaign to end fistula**'. The aim is to create 'Centres of Excellence for the prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula'. This program is supported by the Ville de Genève, Geneva Communes, foundations, 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

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

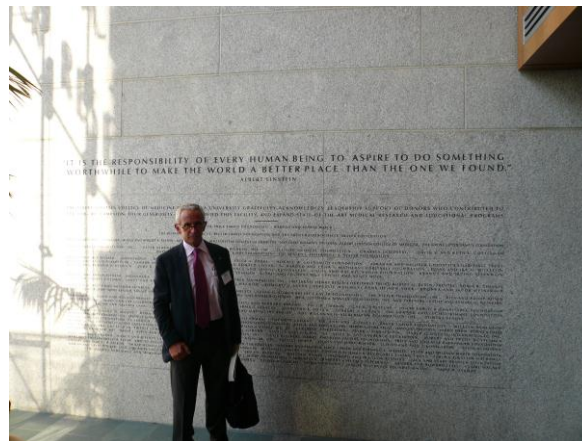


FVV surgical session in Tanguieta

During 2010 several missions were conducted to different African countries, where Prof. Charles-Henry Rochat the overall responsible of fistula project with his group of specialists trained local doctors and operated fistula cases.

During this reporting period several conferences and workshops have been organized by Prof. Charles-Henry Rochat and his team in different countries on diagnosis, treatment, follows up of fistula as well as multidisciplinary approach for the provision of care to women suffering from obstetric fistula. Moreover a number of scientific articles on the fistula were also published in various medical journals.

In June 2010 Professor Charles-Henry Rochat has been nominated as [visiting Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Women's Health of Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University, New-York.](#)



For more details, see:

http://www.gfmer.ch/Activites_internationales_Fr/Rapport_2010_fistules_obstetricales_Rochat.html

The table below shows the location of hospitals and the number of patients operated during 2010 with the support of GFMER.

| Hospital | Country | No of fistula cases operated |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Hôpital St-Jean de Dieu de Tanguiéta | Benin | 83 |
| Hôpital de Dori | Burkina Faso | 13 |
| Clinique Saint Marc | Burkina Faso | 15 |
| Hôpital Central de Yaoundé | Cameroun | 26 |
| Hôpital de Kissidougou | Guinée | 55 |
| Hôpital Abéché | Tchad | 13 |
| Total | | 205 |

1.3. 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 and continued until the end of February 2010, with duration of six weeks conducted in several blocks. A total of 15 health professionals successfully completed this course.

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

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

http://www.gfmer.ch/Activites_internationales_Fr/Laos/Lao-report-2009-2010.html

2. Publications, website

2.1. Reproductive Health - The official journal of the Foundation

GFMER hosts the editorial seat of the specialist journal *Reproductive Health*. *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.

The link below provides the access to the articles published in Reproductive Health journal:

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

2.2. Website (www.gfmer.ch)



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

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

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

In 2010 the GFMER website had 8,035,582 pageviews, 3,280,375 absolute unique visitors from 231 countries.

The 2010 GFMER website statistics are summarized in the following documents:

http://www.gfmer.ch/Usage_statistics/GFMER-visitors-2010.html

http://www.gfmer.ch/Usage_statistics/GFMER-map-2010.html

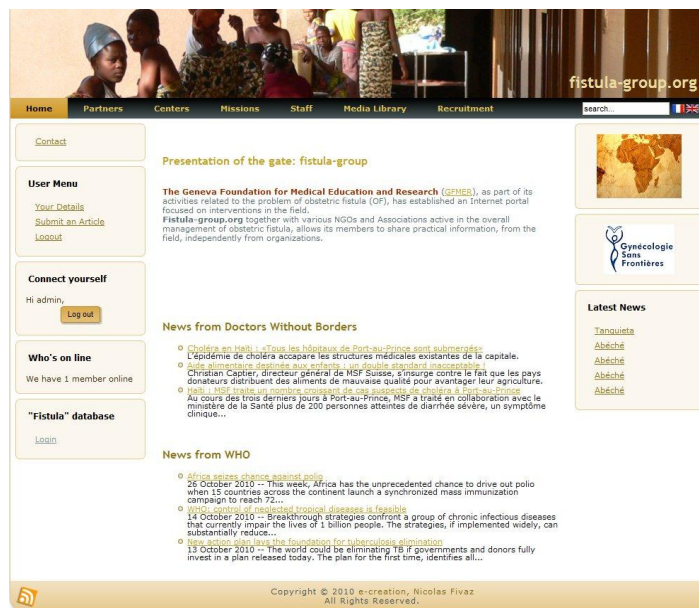
http://www.gfmer.ch/Usage_statistics/GFMER-sources-2010.html

3. Informatics

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.

In 2010 GFMER has developed a new website in order to create a network between people and NGOs working in this field.

www.fistulagroup.org



4. Foundation membership



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

Till now a total of 379 personal pages for members from 87 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