

**GENEVA FOUNDATION
FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH**



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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Table of Contents

Preface by the director.....	5
Mission	6
GFMER main fields of activities	7
1. Training course in sexual and reproductive health research 2023	7
Course participants.....	7
Recruitment of participants	7
Selection of participants.....	7
Course contents.....	8
Teachers, partner institutions	8
Teaching methods	8
1.1 Course in female genital mutilation 2023	9
Objectives	10
Course participants.....	10
Recruitment of participants	12
Selection of participants.....	12
Course contents.....	13
Teachers, partner institutions	13
Coaching	13
Teaching methods	13
1.2 Course in adolescent sexual and reproductive health 2023	13
Objectives	14
Course participants.....	14
Recruitment of participants	16
Selection of participants.....	16
Course contents.....	17
Teachers, partner institutions	17

Coaching	17
Teaching methods	17
1.3 Course in research methodology, research protocol development and scientific writing 2023.....	17
Objectives	18
Course participants.....	18
Recruitment of participants	20
Selection of participants.....	20
Course contents.....	20
Teachers, partner institutions	21
Coaching	21
Teaching methods	21
1.4 Course evaluation.....	21
1.5 Following participants after the course	22
1.6 Course coordinators at country level	22
1.7 Picture of the week	24
1.8 Participation in the 36th meeting of the HRP Policy and Coordination Committee	26
2. Sexual and reproductive rights.....	27
3. Clinical training, prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula.....	27
3.1 General	27
3.2 Country activities.....	28
3.3 Fistula group mission.....	29
3.4 Scholarships and training support program	30
3.5 Scientific committees	30
3.6 New partnership in 2023: Signature of an agreement with CIESPAC	30
3.7 Awareness and training.....	31
3.8 Shipment of equipment and renovation of clinic building.....	31
4. GFMER Global Health New Challenges: Online Courses	31

4.1 E-learning public health course on Cancer in the Context of Universal Health Coverage	32
4.2 E-learning public health course on Emergency and Surgical Care in UHC	34
4.3 WHO online COVID-19 courses	36
4.4 Research and Publications of GFMER Global Health New Challenges with Institutional partnerships	36
4.5 Partnership/collaboration programs with GFMER Global Health New Challenges	37
4.6 GFMER Global Health New Challenges representation in global conferences/meetings and education programs.	37
5. Institutional partnerships	38
GFMER collaborative activities with Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute (OMPHI) and Harvard Maternal Health Taskforce	38
The evidence-based management of Pre-eclampsia and Eclampsia	38
The evidence-based management of postpartum haemorrhage	38
Maternal infections	38
Obstetric fistula	38
INTERGROWTH-21st.....	39
INTERPRACTICE-21st	39
COVID-19 in pregnancy, delivery and the neonatal period.....	39
Supporting Women in Science Program – Aga Khan University	39
E-learning modules – Statistics.....	40
Activities planned for 2024	41
Courses on sexual and reproductive health and research 2024	41
Training course in child and adolescent health in humanitarian settings.....	41
Sexual health course.....	41
GFMER collaborative activities with Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute and Harvard Maternal Health Taskforce	41
Development of new e-learning modules.....	41

Preface by the director

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) is a non-profit organization established in 2002. It is supported by Swiss and international institutions and works in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO).

In 2023 the foundation and its partners launched for the thirteenth consecutive year, a series of distance training/online courses on sexual and reproductive health and research: a total of 99 health professionals from 33 countries attended the female genital mutilation training programme; a total of 324 health professionals from 22 countries attended the adolescent sexual and reproductive health training programme for Francophone African Region; and a total of 121 health professionals from 44 countries attended the research methodology, research protocol development and scientific writing training programme.

GFMER continues the Fistula Group Programme. The aim has been 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 of “Tanguiéta Model”. During 2023, several missions were conducted in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, and Madagascar where Professor Charles-Henry Rochat (who has the overall responsibility for GFMER’s fistula project) and his team of specialists, operated on a total of 286 obstetric fistula cases during surgical workshops and routine surgical practice. Moreover, local doctors were trained on the management of obstetric fistula.

GFMER’s online courses on Global Health New Challenges, and online courses on maternal and newborn health offered in collaboration with Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute (OMPHI) continued in 2023. Additionally, the new version of the Pre-eclampsia and eclampsia course, updated in 2022, was published.

GFMER has built a strong partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations and universities for the exchange of information and expertise at international level. The website of the foundation had several visitors from all over the world.

We believe our efforts to assist in many countries and the programmes we deliver contribute to improving the health and well-being of the populations in need, particularly their reproductive and sexual health status.



Prof. Aldo Campana
The Director

Mission

The overall objectives of the Foundation are to promote and develop health education and research programs.

Foundation Council

- Prof. Giuseppe Benagiano (President)
- Dr. Blaise Bourrit (Secretary)
- Dr. Grace Bianchi-Movarekhi
- Dr. Georges Antoine de Boccard

Executive Committee

- Prof. Aldo Campana (Director)
- Prof. Charles-Henry Rochat (Co-director)
- Dr. Karim Abawi
- Dr. Anne-Caroline Benski
- Dr. Hongguang Dong
- Dr. Raqibat Idris
- Mrs. Fionna Poon
- PD Dr. Pierre Vassilakos

GFMER main fields of activities

1. Training course in sexual and reproductive health research 2023

<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/index.htm>

Since 2003 GFMER, in partnership with the WHO and other partner institutions, has organized a training course on sexual and reproductive health research. The course focuses on research methodology and attracts the participation of health professionals from different countries, particularly from developing countries. Through the pool of participants, GFMER has managed to disseminate the course in different countries.

In order to reach more health professionals, in 2010 GFMER in collaboration with WHO and other partners launched the online course on sexual and reproductive health research "From Research to Practice: Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research" that offers a training package specially developed for those health professionals involved in research in this field, whose access to learning is limited by time, financial resources or other constraints and for whom access to quality education and learning is limited. The programme is designed to meet a wide range of contemporary issues in sexual and reproductive health, especially in developing countries. It helps students to better identify the problems related to reproductive and sexual health, it helps to improve the skills of caregivers, and it promotes good practices. To better tailor the course to the specific needs of our participants, in 2018, the course was restructured into individual modular courses "Courses on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research" each with its own goal and objectives.

The courses form part of the WHO policy for increasing human resources in the field of sexual and reproductive health, particularly in developing countries. GFMER is mandated to organize the courses.

Course participants

The students in the courses are health professionals from diverse background but mainly from low- and middle- income countries, involved in the area of reproductive and sexual health and whose access to healthcare training is limited by time and/or financial resources. This includes doctors, midwives, nurses, health educators, social workers, advocates, reproductive and sexual health programme managers and other healthcare workers. Most of the participants are in the age groups 25 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years. The health professionals in these age groups have work or familial obligations and, for them, our courses are likely to have the most impact; thanks to the flexibility of the courses, which offers a good opportunity to access continuing training in the field of care. Women are well-represented in our courses.

Recruitment of participants

The participants become aware of the courses through various means including publicity for the course through local contact coordinators in the countries and regions and on the GFMER website and partner sites, as well as mobilization of the GFMER and WHO networks.

Selection of participants

This course is a post-graduate/continued learning course for health professionals with a diploma involved in the field of sexual and reproductive health. The standard criteria for selection are as follows:

- A degree in a relevant discipline of health sciences, natural sciences, or social and economic sciences.
- Involvement in the domain of sexual and reproductive health.
- Preference is given to health professionals who work for health establishments at the district level, an NGO, or a ministry of health.
- Nomination by WHO, WHO regional offices and other institutions- sponsored participants.
- The Foundation encourages the participation of women.

It is noted that the Foundation has established partnerships with NGOs, health ministries, and universities in different countries. Certain entities include our courses in their human resource development programmes. Moreover, each year, a number of participants find the information on their own when consulting the Foundation site or on partner sites.

The application must contain the following elements:

- A CV.
- A letter of motivation indicating clearly their interests and goals for the course.

Based on the application form and documents provided by the candidates, we make our pre-selection and the selected candidates or their employers are contacted by our Geneva Team. We communicate the list of candidates to the country coordinators who we ask to also contact the candidates by phone, email, or WhatsApp. When possible, we try – via our coordinators - to meet on site. For countries where we do not have local coordinators, we ask other coordinators in nearby regions to assume contact. For example, for South Sudan, we call our coordinator in Sudan.

Course contents

GFMER training courses are run by course coordinators who decide the content and schedule of the course and designate its contributors. The course coordinators are experts or scientists from WHO and/or various universities who possess important professional networks at the international level.

The content of our courses is based on recommendations by WHO and can therefore be recognised by other global institutions. It is also enhanced by field experience from our teachers with a wide range of experience in the field of sexual and reproductive health. It is based on groundwork, especially in low- and middle- income countries and proposes pragmatic solutions. We provide reference materials for our students and encourage them to use it in their professional practice (prevention, treatment and training as well as in advocacy and programming).

Teachers, partner institutions

The speakers, lecturers, and course facilitators are highly trained professionals from WHO, universities, and specialized institutions. They have a wide range of knowledge and experience in the field of sexual and reproductive health and research, especially in low-income countries.

Throughout the training course, participants are supervised by country coordinators, the course coordinators, teachers and tutors.

Teaching methods

Teaching methods for GFMER SRHR course consist of on-line lectures (video recordings, didactic presentations), key readings, reading materials, additional references and referrals to related websites.

For each module, participants receive assignments. For their assignments, the students receive very precise instructions. We prepare a guideline for assignments. Before writing the assignment, the student is asked to follow the course, read the reference documents that we put at their disposal, and write their text according to the given instruction. We also create an evaluation grid of personal work. Tutors and coordinators revise the assignments using the assignment marking guides provided. The goal is to help students deal with problems of sexual and reproductive health in their respective countries, using what they learn in our courses and preparing their work with respect to academic and scientific standards.

In terms of documentation and published educational resources, the GFMER Training Courses in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research are among the richest in the world. They contain the most reference documents (guidelines), continuously updated in the field of sexual and reproductive health and research. These help participants to become more familiar with scientific reading and writing and use the knowledge acquired in the training courses in their day-to-day professional practice. A personal coach is assigned to each participant. Coaches are mostly GFMER country coordinators and former participants, who facilitate the learning process with the participants. As part of the students' work is based on the analysis of local situations in regard to sexual and reproductive health problems, the assistance of country coordinators / coaches is very important.

The participation of a student is measured by the submission of assignments in the time given. Once their work is completed, reviewed, and accepted for a given module, the student is credited with the expected hours of work (6 to 8 hours) per week, regardless of the actual time it took to complete the work.

To support the participants, different mechanisms of communication and interaction (Facebook, Google Groups, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Zoom) are used. These tools favour interaction between participants and teachers and, allow for the creation of a rich network of exchange between health professionals. The variety within the community of students and the establishment of communication tools has furnished an excellent means of learning and of sharing experiences between students from different countries.

GFMER provides free access to the course contents, which are an important source of information for professionals who are involved in the domain of sexual and reproductive health and research (only registered students benefit from a regular monitoring and obtaining a certificate).

The online community created by GFMER for the training course improves communication with and between participants and provides access to academic and administrative support. The diversity among participants and the network facilitated by GFMER provide an opportunity to learn from and share practices with peers from around the world.

In 2023, GFMER successfully implemented the thirteenth edition of its online training courses, bringing to bear the experience gained from the previous editions.

1.1 Course in female genital mutilation 2023

<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/fgm/index.htm>

In response to the real need and a high demand for continuing training in female genital mutilation, the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research, in partnership with the Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research of the World Health Organisation, offered an online upgraded training course in female genital mutilation.

This training course is designed for health professionals of different levels of knowledge and education (including doctors, midwives, nurses, health educators) who are involved in the provision of sexual and reproductive health services worldwide, and reproductive and sexual health program and program implementation managers.

Objectives

To sensitize health professionals on WHO resources and tools for the different roles they play as health systems decision makers, agents of change among their peers, patients and community.

Course participants

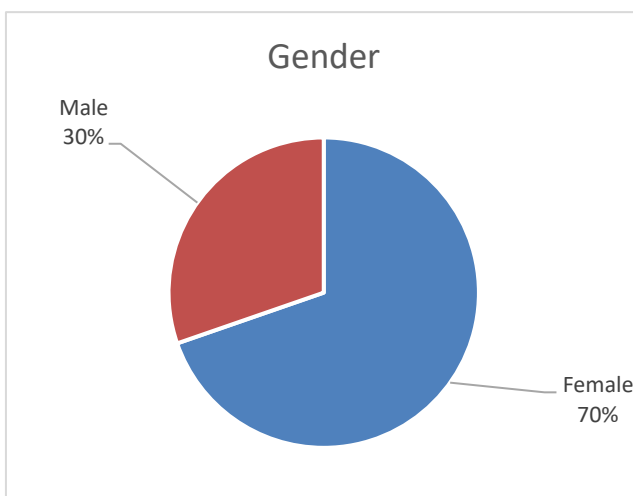
<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/fgm/participants.htm>

A total of 99 health professionals from 33 countries attended the female genital mutilation training programme. Majority of the participants (52%) were in the age group 35 to 44 years (Table 1), and as indicated in Graph 1, women made up 70% of participants.

Table 1: Age of participants

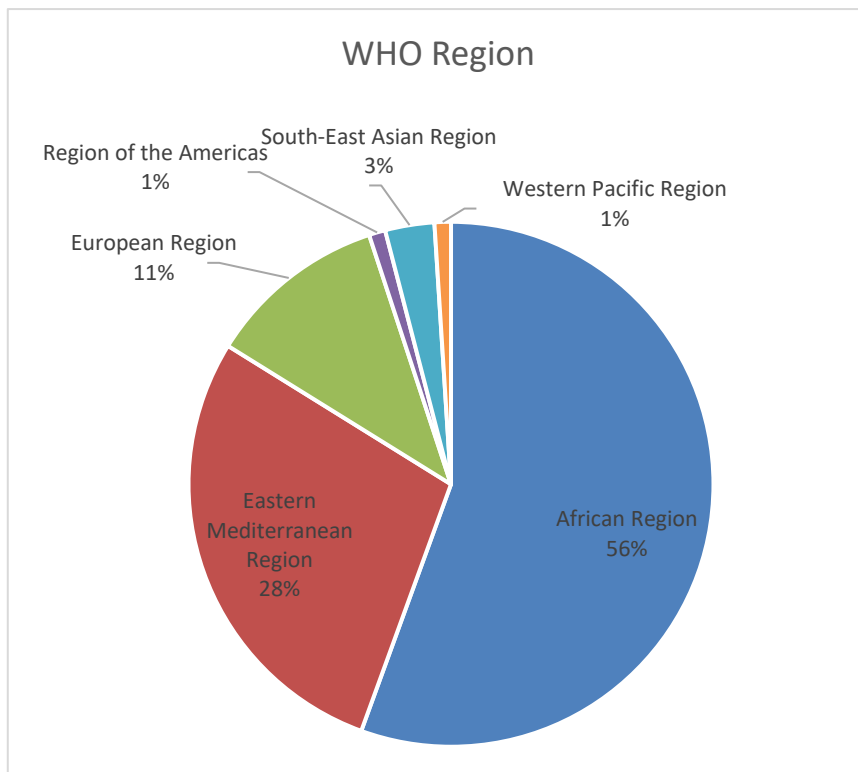
Age Group	No. of participants	%
18-24 years old	1	1%
25-34 years old	14	14%
35-44 years old	51	52%
45-54 years old	25	25%
> 55 years old	8	8%
Total	99	100%

Graph 1: Gender of participants



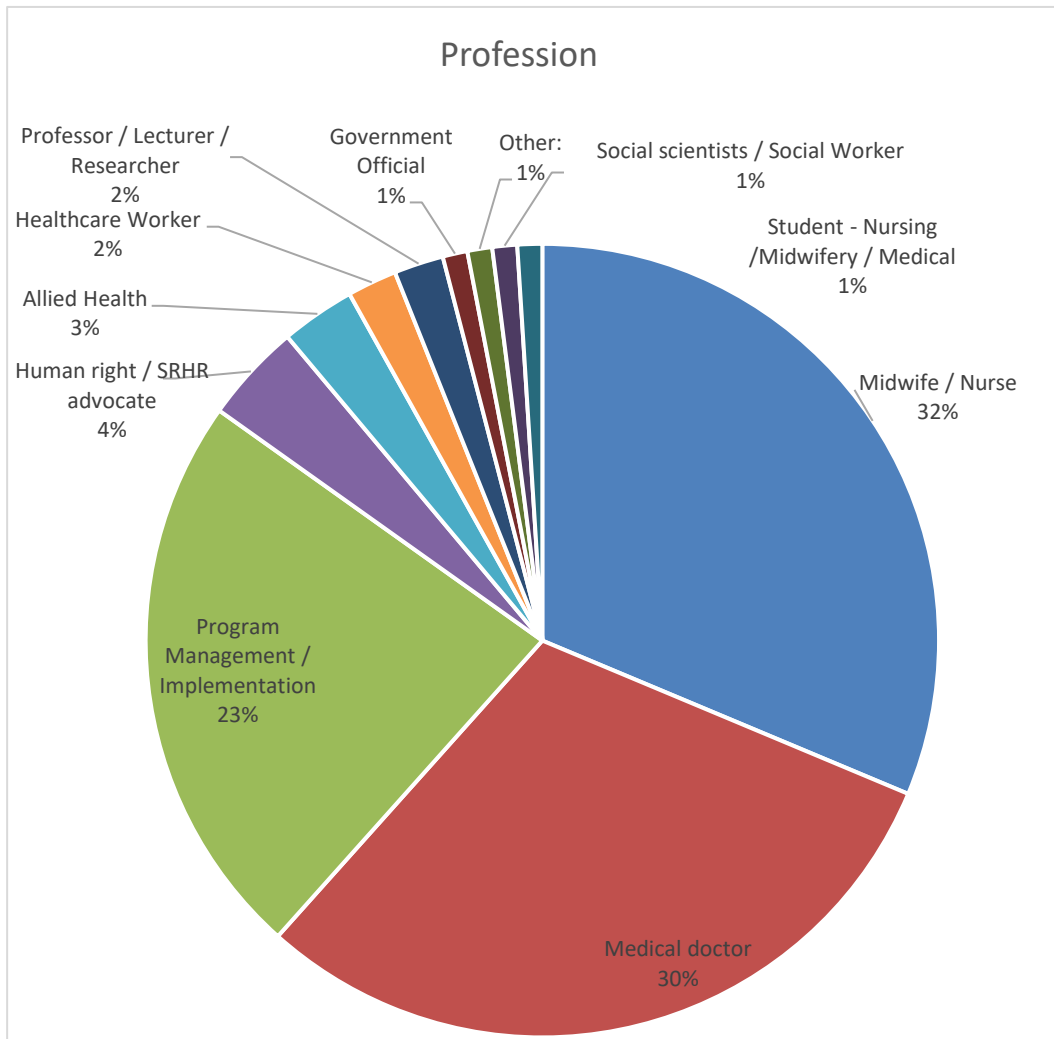
This course was attended by health professionals mainly from Africa (56%) and Eastern Mediterranean (28%), then Europe (11%), South-East Asia (3%), America (1%), and Western Pacific (1%) (Graph 2).

Graph 2: Geographic distribution of participants by WHO Regions



Graph 3 shows the proportions between the different professions with the largest being Midwife / Nurse (31%).

Graph 3: Participants' professions



Recruitment of participants

Participants became aware of the course through the following means:

- Publicity for the course by local coordinators of the GFMER in relevant countries and regions.
- Publicity for the course on the GFMER website and partner sites.
- Mobilization of the GFMER and WHO (international, regional and country level communication) networks. WHO HQ nominated and sponsored the majority (62%) of the participants from target countries (Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Somaliland, Sudan, Tanzania, and Yemen). These nominations included WHO regional/country offices, local and international NGOs, WHO collaborating centres at the country level, health ministries, and universities.

Selection of participants

Using set criteria, participants were selected based on the application form and the documents they provided. Sponsored participants were nominated by WHO HQ, WHO Regional and Country Offices and other institutions. Participants or their employers were then contacted by our Geneva Team. The list of candidates was communicated to the country coordinators/ tutors who also contacted the candidates.

Course contents

<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/fgm/weekly-schedule.htm>

The content of this course was based on recommendations by WHO. Reference materials were also provided to students.

Teachers, partner institutions

Teachers from WHO, GFMER as well as other national and international institutions were involved in teaching and tutorship for the female genital mutilation online training course.

Coaching

<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/fgm/tutors.htm>

During the course, a coach was assigned to each participant to support their learning. A total of 11 coaches from 10 countries were assigned to 99 participants in their countries or nearby countries. The roles of coaches were to:

1. collect, review and comment on participants' assignments,
2. answer any technical questions in relation to the course, and
3. facilitate participants' group work and the development and submission of group assignments.

Coaches motivated and interacted with their students through different means including Email, WhatsApp, phone calls, Zoom meetings and Webinars.

Teaching methods

Teaching methods consisted of on-line lectures (video recordings, didactic presentations), key readings, reading materials, additional references and referrals to related websites. A live webinar was organized where technical experts answered to questions from the students.

For each module, participants received assignments with very precise instructions. An assignment guide was prepared to guide participants. Tutors and coordinators revised the assignments using the assignment marking guides provided and communicated feedback to students. Participants also worked in groups to develop and submit a group assignment facilitated by their coaches. This course sensitizes health care providers and decision makers on the existent resources and to build essential knowledge and skills related to FGM prevention and care.

The participation of a student was measured by the submission of assignments in the time given. A student whose work is completed, reviewed, and accepted for a given module is credited with 6 hours per week (24 hours in total), irrespective of the actual time taken to complete the work. At the end of the course, the student received a certificate signed by the organizing institutions.

To support the participants, various mechanisms of communication and interaction (Facebook, Google Groups, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Zoom) were used.

1.2 Course in adolescent sexual and reproductive health 2023

<https://www.gfmer.ch/ssr-cours-2023/ssra/index.htm>

The 2023 online training course in adolescent sexual and reproductive health (Cours en santé sexuelle et reproductive des adolescents 2023): “Meeting the needs and fulfilling the rights of adolescents’ sexual and reproductive health for WHO Francophone African Region” was held for eight weeks. This was the maiden edition of the course implemented in French only.

Working in close Collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and WHO Regional Office for African (WHO AFRO), GFMER recruited a total of 324 health professionals from 22 countries for the course. The Course Coordinators were Dr. Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli of the WHO Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health & Research, Dr. Chilanga Asmani of WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO) and Dr. Ginette Hounkanrin of Pathfinder International, Burkina Faso. Dr. Raqibat Idris and Mrs Fionna Poon were the GFMER Course Manager and Course Administrator respectively.

Objectives

The objectives of the course were as follows:

To build knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1. The rationale for the provision of a package of effective health and social interventions to promote adolescent sexual and reproductive health, to prevent health and social problems, and to respond to them if and when they arise, with particular relevance to the Francophone African Region.
2. WHO’s recommendations for the delivery of these interventions.
3. Special considerations in delivering these interventions to adolescents including in humanitarian settings and COVID 19 pandemic.

Course participants

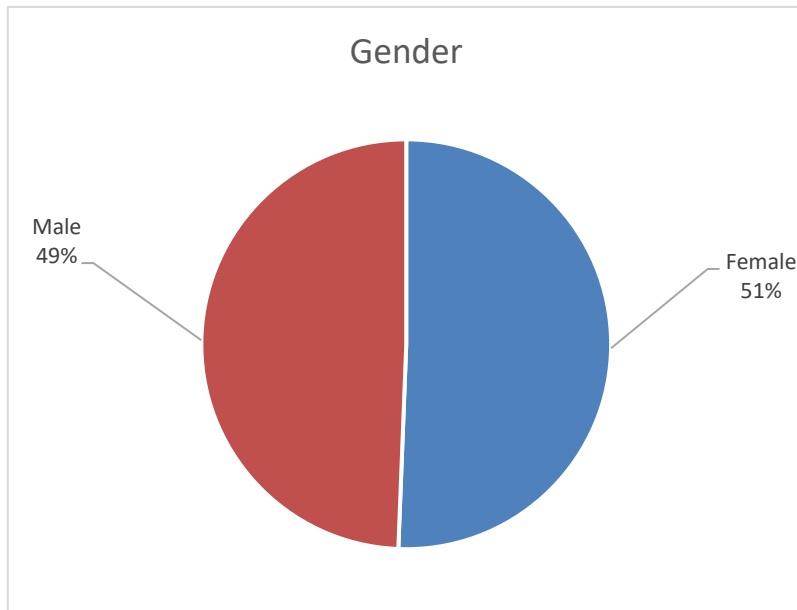
<https://www.gfmer.ch/ssr-cours-2023/ssra/participants.htm>

The students in the course were health professionals from diverse background but mainly from low- and middle- income countries, involved in the area of reproductive and sexual health. Most of the participants (39%) were young adults in the age groups 35 to 44 years (Table 1). Women were well-represented as they made up more than half (51%) of the participants of the course (Graph 1).

Table 1: Age of participants

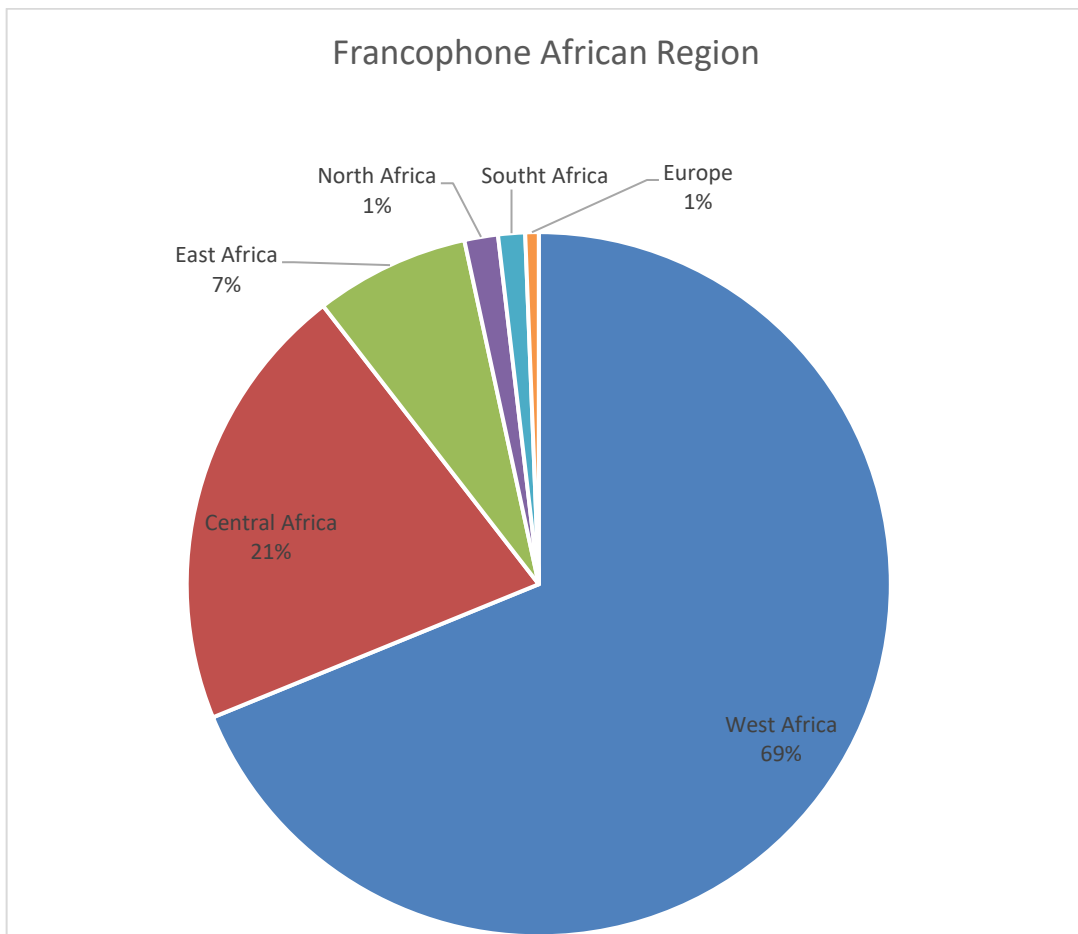
Age Group	No. of participants	%
18-24 years old	9	3%
25-34 years old	76	23%
35-44 years old	127	39%
45-54 years old	84	26%
> 55 years old	28	9%
Total	324	100%

Graph 1: Gender of participants



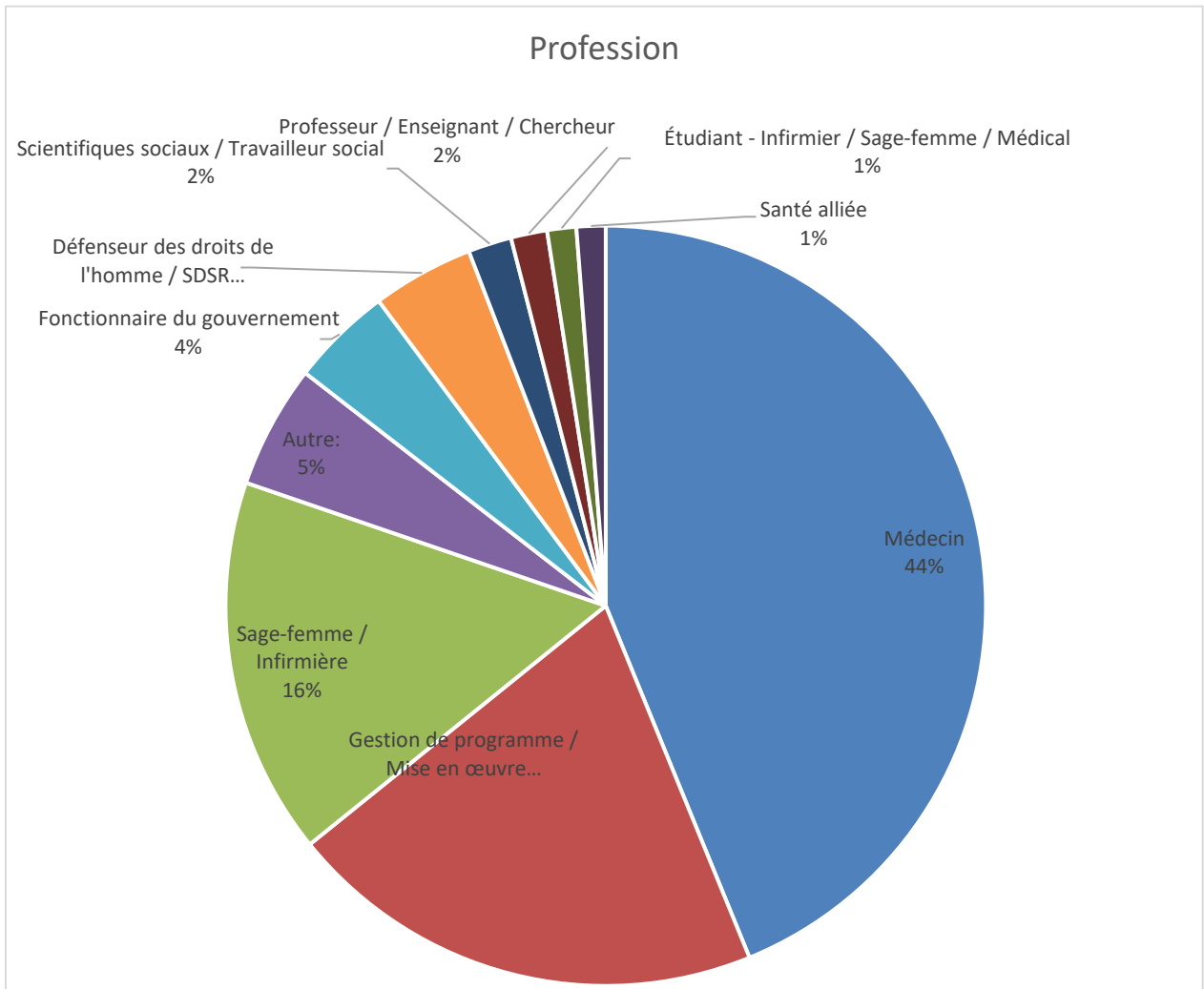
This course was attended by health professionals mainly from West Africa (69%), Central Africa (21%), East Africa (7%), North Africa (2%), South Africa (1%) and Europe (1%) as shown in Graph 2 below.

Graph 2: Geographic distribution of participants by WHO Francophone Regions



The following graph shows the proportions between the different professions. The largest proportion of participants were medical doctors (44%).

Graph 3: Participants' professions



Recruitment of participants

Participants became aware of the course through the following means:

- Publicity for the course through local contact coordinators in the countries and regions.
- Publicity for the course on the GFMER website and partner sites.
- Mobilization of the GFMER and WHO networks. WHO HQ nominated and sponsored 60 candidates from 18 countries (Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, DR Congo, Central African Republic and Senegal). These nominations included health professionals from WHO regional / country offices, local and international NGOs and WHO collaborating centres at the country level, health ministries, and universities. GFMER offered 17 free slots.

Selection of participants

Using set criteria, participants were selected based on the application form and the documents they provided. Sponsored participants were nominated by WHO AFRO and other institutions. Participants

or their employers were then contacted by our Geneva Team. The list of candidates was communicated to the country coordinators / tutors who also contacted the candidates.

Course contents

<https://www.gfmer.ch/ssr-cours-2023/ssra/programme-hebdomadaire.htm>

The content of this course was available in French only and was based on recommendations by WHO. Reference materials were also provided to students.

Teachers, partner institutions

Teachers from WHO, GFMER as well as other national and international institutions were involved in teaching and tutorship for the online training course.

Coaching

<https://www.gfmer.ch/ssr-cours-2023/ssra/tuteurs.htm>

During the course, a coach was assigned to each participant to facilitate their learning. A total of 33 coaches from 16 Francophone African countries were assigned to the 324 participants in their countries or nearby countries. The roles of coaches were to:

1. Collect, review and comment on participants' assignments, and
2. Answer any technical questions in relation to the course.

Coaches motivated and interacted with their students through different means including Email, WhatsApp, Zoom meetings and Webinars.

Teaching methods

The course language was French. Teaching methods consisted of on-line lectures (video recordings, didactic presentations), key readings, reading materials, additional references and referrals to related websites.

For each module, participants received assignments with very precise instructions. An assignment guide was prepared to guide participants. Tutors and coordinators revised the assignments using the assignment marking guides provided and communicated feedback to students. The goal was to provide the students with the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the needs and fulfil the rights of adolescents' sexual and reproductive health in their respective countries, and especially the Francophone African region.

The participation of a student was measured by the submission of assignments in the time given. Once the student's work is completed, reviewed, and accepted for a given module, he/she is credited with 6 hours per week (48 hours in total), irrespective of the actual time taken to complete the work. At the end of the course, the student received a certificate signed by the organizing institutions.

To support the participants, various mechanisms of communication and interaction (Facebook, Google Groups, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Zoom) were used.

1.3 Course in research methodology, research protocol development and scientific writing 2023

<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/research-methodology/index.htm>

Objectives

The objective of this course is to provide knowledge and skills in research methodology, research protocol development and scientific writing to health professionals in sexual and reproductive health field. The course aims to enhance participants’ knowledge of research methodology and how to develop research protocols and improve their scientific writing.

Course participants

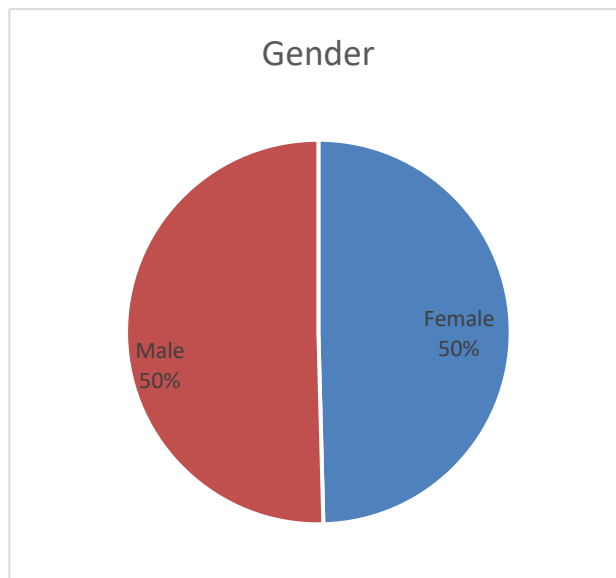
<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/research-methodology/participants.htm>

A total of 121 health professionals from 44 countries attended the research methodology, research protocol development and scientific writing training programme. The majority of participants (38%) were in the age group 35 to 44 years (Table 1) with the same proportion of male and female (50%) (Graph 1).

Table 1: Age of participants

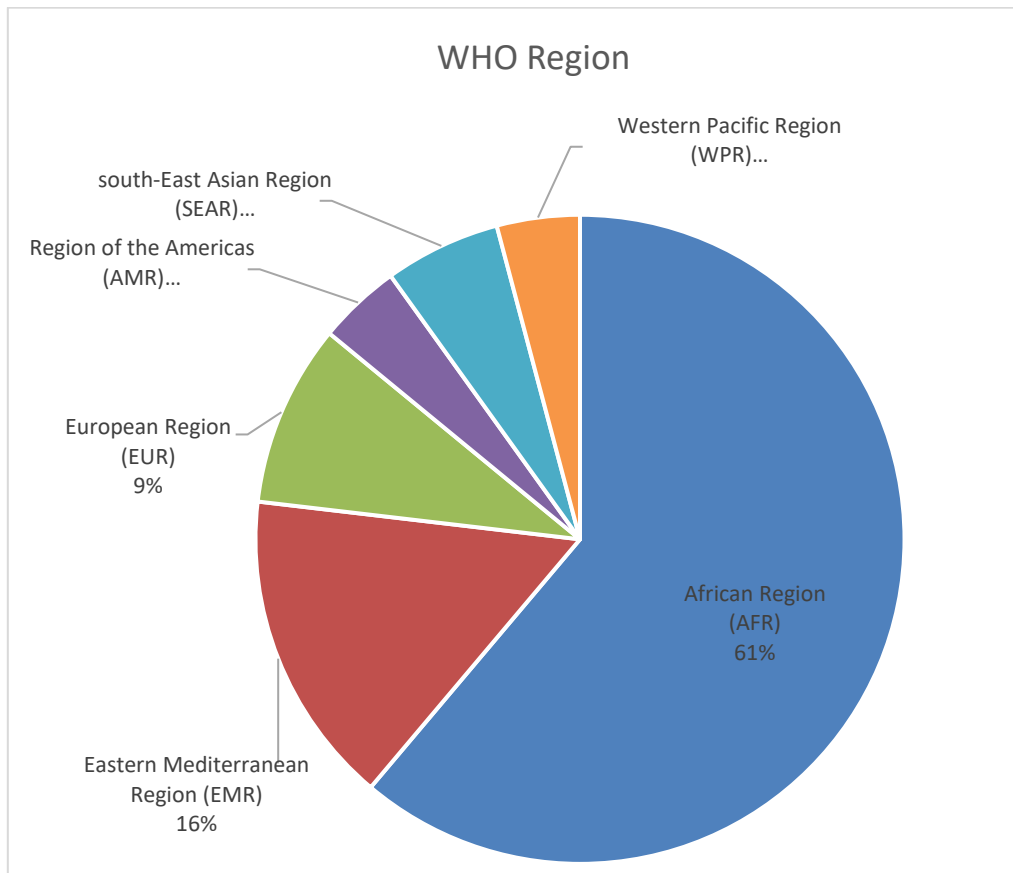
Age group	No. of participants	%
18-24 years old	5	4%
25-34 years old	41	34%
35-44 years old	46	38%
45-54 years old	22	18%
> 55 years old	7	6%
Total	121	100%

Graph 1: Gender of participants



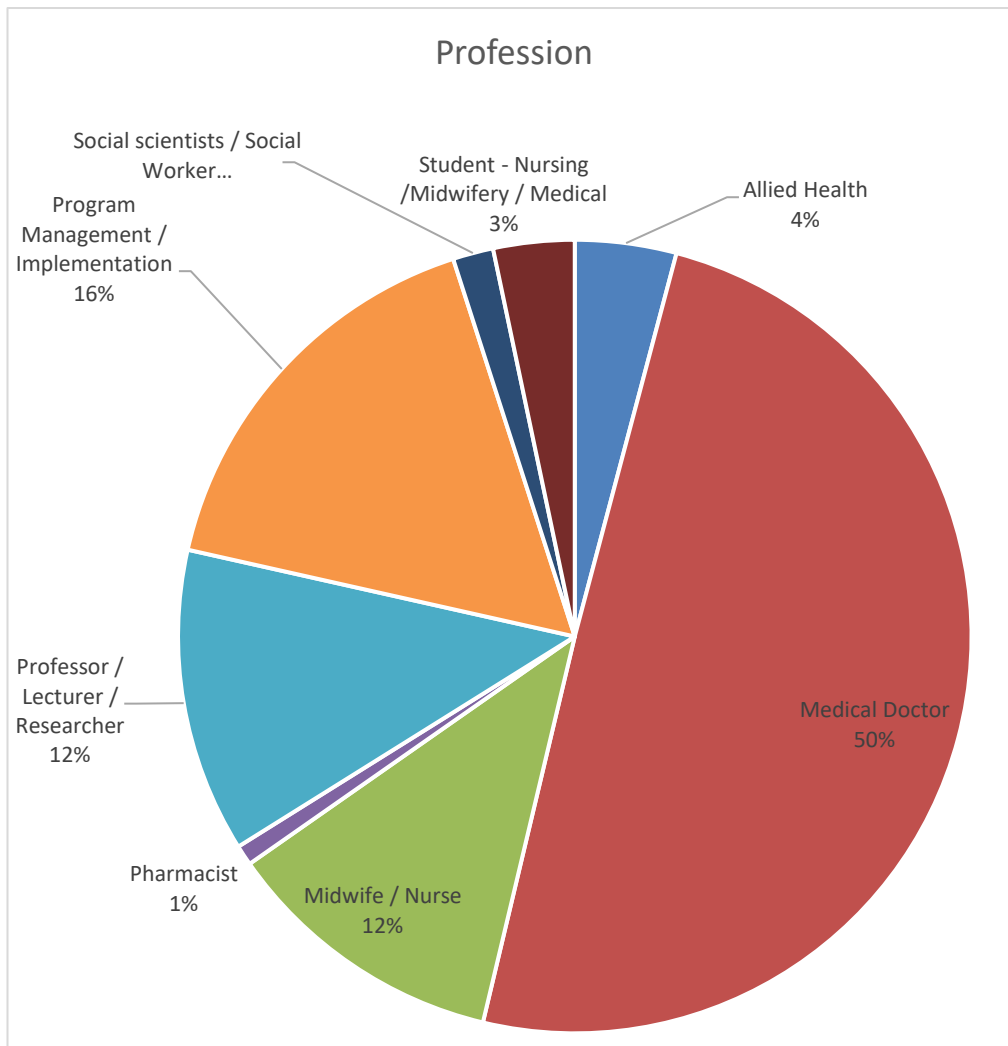
This course was attended by health professionals mainly from Africa (61%), Eastern Mediterranean (16%), Europe (9%), South-East Asia (6%), America (4%) and Western Pacific (4%) (Graph 2).

Graph 2: Geographic distribution of participants by WHO Regions



Graph 3 shows the proportions between the different professions with the largest group of participants being medical doctors (50%).

Graph 3: Participants' professions



Recruitment of participants

Participants became aware of the course through the following means:

- Publicity for the course through local contact coordinators in the countries and regions.
- Publicity for the course on the GFMER website and partner sites.
- Mobilization of the GFMER and WHO networks. These include WHO regional/country offices, local and international NGOs, WHO collaborating centres at the country level, health ministries, and universities.

Selection of participants

Using set criteria, participants were selected based on the application form and the documents they provided. Sponsored participants were nominated by their institutions or other institutions. Participants or their employers were then contacted by our Geneva Team. The list of candidates was communicated to the country coordinators/ tutors who also contacted the candidates.

Course contents

<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/research-methodology/weekly-schedule.htm>

The content of this course is based on recommendations by WHO, enhanced by field experience from our teachers with a wide range of expertise in sexual and reproductive health and research. Reference materials were provided to students for them to use in their professional practice.

Teachers, partner institutions

Teachers from WHO, Oxford University and GFMER as well as other national and international institutions were involved in teaching and tutorship for the online training course.

Coaching

<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2023/research-methodology/tutors.htm>

A total of 15 coaches from 12 countries were assigned to the 121 participants in their countries or nearby countries during the course. The coaches' responsibilities were to:

1. collect, review and comment on participants' assignments,
2. guide participants through the development of their research protocols,
3. review and provide feedback on the research protocols developed by the students, and
2. answer any technical questions in relation to the course.

Coaches motivated and interacted with their participants through various means including Email, WhatsApp, phone calls, Zoom meetings and Webinars.

Teaching methods

Teaching methods consisted of on-line lectures (video recordings, didactic presentations), key readings, reading materials, additional references and referrals to related websites. Live webinars to teach and to respond to participants' questions were organized.

For each module, participants received assignments with very precise instructions. The students also developed a research protocol on a topic related to their area of practice. Guides were provided to help the participants prepare their assignments and research protocols. Tutors and coordinators revised the assignments and research protocols using the assignment marking guides provided and communicated feedback to students. The goal was to enhance participants' knowledge of research methodology and how to develop research protocols and to improve their scientific writing.

The participation of a student was measured by the submission of assignments and the research protocol in the time given. A student whose work is completed, reviewed, and accepted for all the modules including the submission of a research protocol is credited with a total of 60 hours, irrespective of the actual time taken to complete the work. At the end of the course, the student received a certificate signed by the organizing institutions.

To support the participants, different mechanisms of communication and interaction (Facebook, Google Groups, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Zoom) were used.

1.4 Course evaluation

At the end of the course, participants and coaches of the training courses in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research are required to complete and submit the end of course survey. The responses

from these surveys are used to monitor how well our courses meet the needs of our participants and to improve on the courses.

1.5 Following participants after the course

Each participant of our courses becomes a member of our Foundation, and we continue to keep contact with them. Monitoring and maintaining contact with them and between them prove to be very useful. Today, GFMER has available an international network of healthcare professionals on ground in direct contact with their communities. It is thanks to this network that we have established collaborations with Harvard University and Oxford University, and the Service of Gynaecology at the University Hospital of Geneva. These institutions collaborate with GFMER to develop training tools for healthcare providers at the community level. The network that the Foundation runs facilitates the dissemination of these tools. This also allows us to establish contacts with NGOs, ministries of health or other institutions in several countries.

1.6 Course coordinators at country level

<https://www.gfmer.ch/country-coordinators/GFMER-country-coordinators.htm>





Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Bhutan



Bolivia



Brazil



Burkina Faso



Cameroon



Colombia



Ecuador



Egypt



Ethiopia



Georgia



Gulf Cooperation Council



India



Indonesia



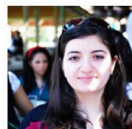
Iran



Iraq



Kenya



Lebanon



Malawi



MENA Region



Mexico



Mongolia



Morocco



Mozambique



Nepal



Nigeria



Pakistan



Sudan



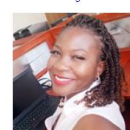
Togo



Turkey



Uganda



Zambia

Terms of Reference for GFMER Country Coordinators

- Student's coaching at local level. I.e., help the students to access the teaching material, learning methods. As the majority of student's paper works (assignments and research protocol) are based on the analysis of local situation in regards to sexual and reproductive health problems, the country coordinators can offer the appropriate assistance to the students.
- Ensure communication with the course organizers and students.
- Advertise course to various local training and research institutions.
- Recruit eligible candidates for the course.
- Create a network within the students from the same country.
- Organize if possible some meetings with students from the same country.

GFMER has appointed a total of 33 coordinators in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Columbia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Gulf Cooperation Council, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, MENA Region, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Sudan, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, and Zambia.

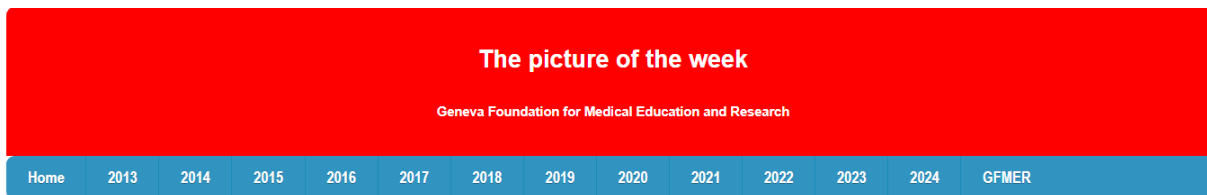
The main tasks of country coordinators consist of:

- Student coaching at local level, i.e., helping the students to access the teaching material and learning methods. As the majority of student’s work (assignments and research protocol) is based on the analysis of local situations in regard to sexual and reproductive health problems, the local coordinators can offer the appropriate assistance to the students.
- Ensure communication with the course organizers and students.
- Advertise the course to various local training and research institutions.
- Recruit eligible candidates for the course.
- Create a network between students from the same country.
- Organize if possible some meetings with students from the same country.
- Identify potential sponsors to provide scholarships for students. It is worth mentioning that the majority of institutions allocate funds for their human resource capacity building programmes.

1.7 Picture of the week

<https://www.gfmer.ch/gfmervoices/pictureoftheweek-2023.htm>

We have created a section on our website entitled “Picture of the week”. Each week, we publish the photo of a student showing their professional activities in a treatment facility, in a refugee camp, on site, in class, etc. This initiative has proved to be very gratifying for our students. It emphasizes the importance of distance training for health professionals where access to training is sometimes limited. It also shows the application of knowledge acquired by our students in their professional practice.



GFMER picture of the week - Images 2023

Clickable thumbnails linking to the corresponding picture of the week



1.8 Participation in the 36th meeting of the HRP Policy and Coordination Committee

GFMER participated as an observer in the 36th meeting of the Policy and Coordination Committee (PCC) of the UNDP-UNFPA-UNICEF-WHO-World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP). The meeting was held from 25 to 27 April 2023 at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. GFMER was represented by Dr Meena Cherian, Dr Raqibat Idris and Ms Fionna Poon. PCC is the governing body of HRP which is imbedded within WHO's Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research (SRHR). Each year, the PCC meeting provides an opportunity to follow the activities of HRP in the preceding and upcoming years and to meet and discuss with GFMER partners in the SRHR department about ongoing and future collaborations. The 36th PCC meeting coincided with WHO's 75th and HRP's 50th anniversaries. The GFMER team also attended the reception to celebrate HRP 50th anniversary.



2. Sexual and reproductive rights

<https://www.gfmer.ch/srr/index.htm>

In order to achieve sexual and reproductive health, people need to know their sexual and reproductive rights. The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) therefore sees a close relationship between sexual and reproductive health on the one hand and the legal and political system on the other. For these reasons, the Foundation created a dedicated website on Sexual and Reproductive Rights. Since its establishment in 2002, GFMER has exchanged sexual and reproductive health expertise with governmental and non-governmental organizations all over the world. GFMER has become a resource centre for training and research in human sexuality and reproduction, creating a vast network of health professionals in developing and developed countries.

With this website GFMER seeks to contribute to a meaningful inclusion of human rights in sexual and reproductive health issues.

Content of the sexual and reproductive rights website:

- Introductions to major sexual and reproductive rights topics.
- Regularly updated summaries of national legislations for the major areas of sexual and reproductive health.
- Selected publications on legislation and ethical issues in sexual and reproductive health.

3. Clinical training, prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula

<http://www.gfmer.ch/fistula/index.htm>



3.1 General

The year 2023 was marked by a series of significant events and developments: on the surgical mission front, organized or supported by GFMER/Fistula Group, nearly 200 patients underwent surgery in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Cameroon. Surgical workshops are the linchpins of our programs, offering not only free operations, but also mentoring opportunities where knowledge is passed on live.

3.2 Country activities

Benin

In Benin, Dr Jean de Dieu YUNGA FOMA currently holds the position of regulator ("focal point") for missions across the country, under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and in partnership with the Claudine Talon Foundation. Doctor YUNGA FOMA is an international expert in obstetric fistula surgery and is present at all missions organized in Tanguiéta.

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, operations are carried out in Ouagadougou by Dr Moussa GUIRO, with recruitment support from Sentinelles Lausanne. Due to the closure of the border between Burkina Faso and Benin, patients from the east of the country are referred to Ouagadougou instead of Tanguiéta.

Cameroon

In Cameroon, Professor Pierre Marie TEBEU heads the missions in Yaoundé. Professor TEBEU, a former intern in Geneva, is currently Director General of the Centre Inter-états de Santé Publique d'Afrique Centrale (CIESPAC) in Brazzaville. In August 2023, GFMER/Fistula Group and CIESPAC signed a partnership agreement in Geneva for a program to eradicate obstetric fistula in West and Central Africa by 2030. The first surgical workshop is scheduled to take place in Chad and Central Africa in 2024.

Tanguiéta Hospital

As far as Tanguiéta Hospital is concerned, during my visit in March/April, I had the opportunity to discuss with the management and doctors to define the strategy for 2030.

On the financial and administrative front, a certified audit report was published at the beginning of the year. The hospital was impacted by the two-year Covid-19 pandemic and the deterioration in security conditions on the border with Burkina Faso, which led to a drop in attendance and paid consultations. In addition, the deficit in the indigent fund has increased, as seriously ill patients often arrive late and without financial resources.

Donors

As a charitable institution, the Tanguiéta hospital offers care to patients, even if it is known that they will not be able to contribute financially to treatment or operations. The Geneva-based IF Foundation is exploring ways to help in this respect, which is a ray of hope for the hospital.

Quality of care depends on the skills of specialist doctors and working conditions. In 2023, we introduced bonuses for clinical supervision, thanks to the support of the Inspi'r Foundation, which also awarded specialization grants to young doctors. With a view to attracting more senior doctors, an operating room has been equipped for laparoscopic surgery and live transmissions via videoconferencing.

Finally, a budget has been allocated for the renovation of the clinic building, to improve accommodation conditions for patients coming from Cotonou or elsewhere for specialized operations. The TOPAZE Foundation has been supporting Swiss surgeons' programs for 20 years.

The Global Foundation for Health Sciences has supported us for the past three years, following the withdrawal of the City of Geneva. This support enabled us to restructure as we faced the most difficult challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

Fortunately, private donors and foundations have also contributed to our cause. These include the Baur Foundation, the McCall & McBain Foundation, the Stiftung Foundation, the Lotti Latrous Foundation, the Rumsey Cartier Foundation, the Pharos Trusts Foundation and the Agape Foundation. These combined efforts give GFMER/Fistula Group the impetus it needs to continue its work.

International scientific committees

Recognition of our serious, training-focused work means that we are included in international scientific committees. In 2023, I had the opportunity to speak at the congresses of the Fédération des Associations et Sociétés d'Urologie de Langue Française (FASULF), the International Federation of Gynecologists and Obstetricians (FIGO), of which I am a member of the Fistula Committee, and the Association Française d'Urologie (AFU). This scientific aspect is essential, because conscience without science would only be the ruin of a humanist's soul!

3.3 Fistula group mission

https://fistula-group.ch/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/240328_ENG_rapport-mission-Benin-copie.pdf

Benin - April 2023

- 21 cases of obstetric fistulas and/or perineal tears
- 6 cases of urogenital prolapse
- 6 cases of complex urethral stenosis in men
- 1 case of prostatic hypertrophy

Benin - October 2023

29 cases of obstetric fistulas and/or perineal tears cared for by a team made up of expert surgeons from the Fistula Group, local doctors and doctors in training.

Benin - November 2023

- 21 cases of obstetric fistula and/or perineal tear
- 6 cases of urogenital prolapse
- 6 cases of complex urethral stenosis in men
- 1 case of prostatic hypertrophy

Cameroon, 2 missions

As in the other CEMAC member countries (Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Chad), the management of obstetric fistulas suffers from a lack of awareness, material, and financial resources, as well as a shortage of qualified and competent human resources.

Two missions led by Prof. Tebeu took place this year. Their aim was to surgically treat women suffering from fistulas, prolapse and urinary incontinence.

A total of 25 women underwent surgery during the campaign.

Burkina Faso "routine case management"

The treatment strategy adopted at this facility is "routine case management", which involves managing patients as and when they are admitted, using in-house expertise.

For the whole of 2023, a total of 121 patients underwent surgery, with a 94% success rate at discharge and 3% incontinence, which will gradually be resolved by perineal re-education sessions.

3.4 Scholarships and training support program

A major scholarship program has been set up. It is a long-term program covering several years.

The Fistula Group program focuses on reconstructive surgery, treatment of obstetric fistula and prolapse, improvement of the health care system, prevention, reintegration of patients, and most importantly, training and research.

The "Tanguiéta Model" has led to the emergence of an efficient training centre for the surgical treatment of obstetric fistula in West Africa. In Tanguiéta, dozens of surgeons but also trainers of surgeons have passed through and followed operative workshops. It was also in Tanguiéta that didactic material was developed. The hospital has generated a "cascade effect" with the replication of "fistula treatment schools" in emerging countries. The training of African doctors developed by the Fistula Group is bearing fruit, as it is now mostly doctors from the continent who treat fistula cases on a daily basis.

The program is based on practical workshops / operating missions organised on a recurring basis in these partner locations, several times a year.

It also aims to train more than fifteen doctors and nurses carefully selected for their skills but also their seriousness and motivation.

Scholarship

The scholarship holders are mainly from the Saint Jean de Dieu Hospital in Tanguiéta (Benin), a long-standing partner of Fistula Group, but also from Madagascar, which is cruelly lacking in specialized surgeons.

3.5 Scientific committees

- Dr Rochat played an active role in presenting a paper on obstetric fistula at the « Journée d'andrologie et de médecine sexuelle 2023 » / AFU, Association Française d'Urologie
- He was also heavily involved in the FIGO (International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics) World Congress on October 11, 2023.

3.6 New partnership in 2023: Signature of an agreement with CIESPAC

Intensifying the fight against obstetric fistula in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad, GFMER, through the Fistula Group program, invited Prof. Pierre-Marie Tebeu to Geneva in July 2023 to finalize the signing of an agreement with CIESPAC. The main aim of this 5-year renewable agreement is to set up surgical workshops in the various CIESPAC countries, in which operators from the different countries, identified as future trainers, will participate. This initiative is in line with the Brazzaville Declaration of May 23, 2023, which aims to "eliminate obstetric fistulas in the CEMAC zone by 2030", and which entrusted Prof. Tebeu with the mission of structuring obstetric fistula management in the countries in which he is a referent. This agreement begins with the identification of a manager (focal point) per country to set up surgical workshops.

3.7 Awareness and training

Laparoscopy is now a reality at Hôpital Saint Jean de Dieu in Tanguiéta

In 2022, it was decided to develop a laparoscopy and hysteroscopy program, with Dr Gayito, Dr Aholou and Dr Azakapa, respectively a general surgeon, a gynecologist, and a pediatric surgeon, all having experience in laparoscopy. Laparoscopy requires CO₂, which until now has been a limiting factor. Now that this gas is produced in Cotonou, supply problems have been solved.

Golden Jubilee celebrations at Hôpital Saint Jean de Dieu in Tanguiéta

As part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations at Hôpital Saint Jean de Dieu de Tanguiéta, a virtual round table was organized on the theme of "30 years of humanitarian cooperation for the benefit of the sick". Fistula Group was present through the participation of Dr. Charles-Henry Rochat. HSJD humanitarian aid workers were given the opportunity to share their experience in caring for the sick.

Video clips

April 2023 For the first time, it was possible to experience the mission of the GFMER Foundation's Fistula Group program in Tanguiéta, in April 2023, through 5 video clips directed by Dr Rochat and published on the Fistula Group Youtube channel.

3.8 Shipment of equipment and renovation of clinic building

A budget has been allocated for the renovation of the clinic building, to improve accommodation conditions for patients coming from Cotonou and elsewhere for specialized operations.

This is in addition to the dispatch of surgical, endoscopic, urological, and video transmission equipment.

4. GFMER Global Health New Challenges: Online Courses

E-learning public health course on Cancer in the context of Universal Health Coverage (UHC); Emergency and Surgical Care in UHC; and GFMER collation of specific WHO online courses on COVID-19.

<https://www.gfmer.ch/surgery/cancer.htm>

Earlier research was coordinated by the GFMER in collaboration with the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre, USA, on Global community perception of 'surgical care' as a public health issue. This cross-sectional survey was completed by 1954 respondents from 118 countries. It

showed that there is still a widespread gap in awareness on the importance of surgical care as a public health issue. This led to developing of GFMER online public health courses to address the gap.

<https://www.gfmer.ch/surgery/research.htm>

The GFMER Global Health New Challenges Online Courses program aims to disseminate knowledge on global health topics through developing online courses and research in collaboration with [experts](#) from the academia, World Health Organization (WHO) and International Scientific Organisations.

These online public health courses create awareness on global public health issues and promote education through highlighting key messages from evidence-based publications specifically WHO for an easy understanding of the impact of the global burden of diseases and policies addressing them.

The following courses are available through the GFMER digital platform: [Cancer in the context of UHC](#); [Emergency and Surgical Care in UHC](#); GFMER collation of specific [WHO online courses on COVID-19](#);

These courses provide health professionals with knowledge and skills to address challenges with evidence-based solutions to global health issues towards UHC. In addition, it creates an interest by several academic partners for collaborations to further explore topics on Global Health New Challenges online courses and include them in their outreach education and training programs by sponsoring participants from low- and middle- income countries (LMICs).

Cambodia support: GFMER partner the Health Volunteer Overseas in USA enabled 67 doctors in their outreach training program in Cambodia to complete the course on Emergency and Surgical Care in UHC and successfully scored above 70% to obtain a certificate.

The GFMER Global Health New Challenges program is overseen by [Dr Meena Nathan Cherian](#) with the following collaborative activities with partners in 2023:

4.1 E-learning public health course on Cancer in the Context of Universal Health Coverage

This course provides evidence-based knowledge and experiences from the field for decision-making to engage and prioritise policy issues at all levels of healthcare on cancer in the context of UHC.

This course highlights the following:

- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 targets towards achieving UHC by ensuring equitable access to cancer care to everyone when needed; and
- the burden of cancer can be reduced with an integrated people-centred care with a multidisciplinary approach.

It was developed in partnerships with academic [experts](#) and over 90 reviewers with the aim of providing knowledge in the following areas:

- Public health implications of the unmet need for access to safe and quality cancer care.
- Public health solutions to strengthen cancer management with multidisciplinary approach at all levels of healthcare.
- Policies for an integrated people-centred cancer care including strengthening surgical systems towards achieving UHC.

Target audience are health professionals, project planners and managers, students (medical, nursing, allied health sciences, public health), and anyone interested in public health.

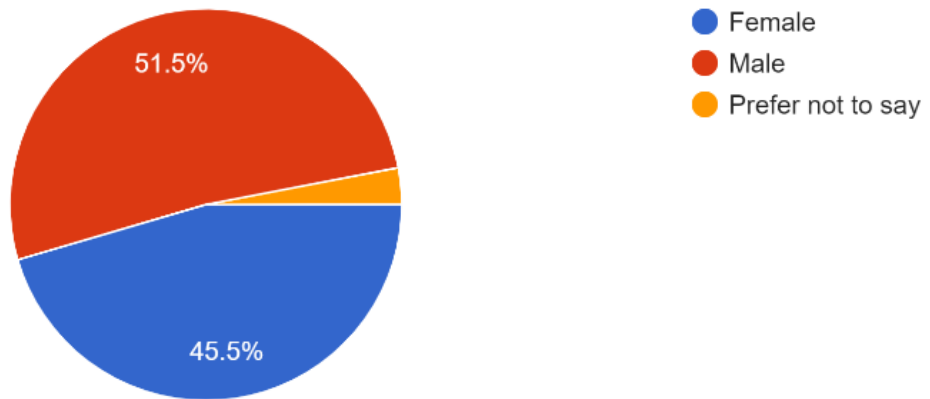
It takes approximately one hour to complete at one's own pace and contains three modules:

1. Global burden of cancer.
2. Integrated cancer care.
3. UHC policies for cancer: strengthening surgical cancer services.

It is a free online course with a mandatory registration. A certificate is provided after completion of the course, a short assignment and MCQ test (before and after the course, which allows evaluation of the knowledge gained). To date 66 participants from 31 countries have registered.

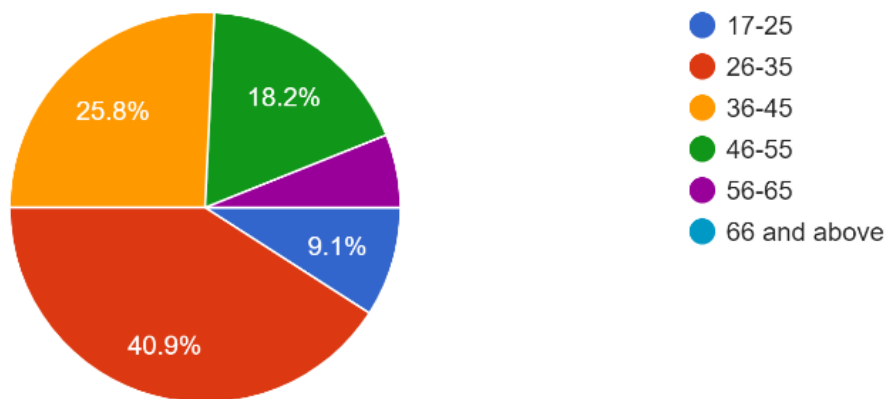
Gender

66 responses



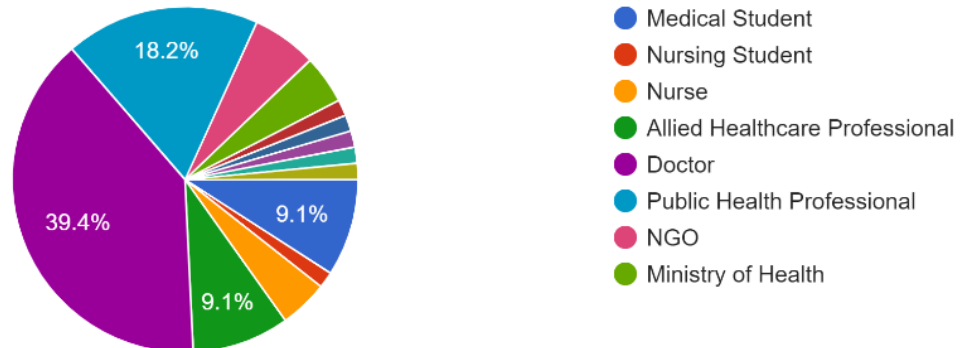
Age in Years

66 responses



Which of the following closely matches your profile or affiliation? (check one)

66 responses



4.2 E-learning public health course on Emergency and Surgical Care in UHC

This course gives an understanding of timely safe surgical care services in reaching the SDGs 3.

The course highlights the following:

- Five billion people lack access to basic life-saving surgical care and it is still not considered as a priority in the field of public health globally and in the national health plans.
- Timely access to lifesaving and disability-preventing emergency and surgical care services are crucial in the entire life-course from birth to old age (in pregnancy-related complications, trauma, congenital anomalies, cancer, abdominal conditions, disasters).

It was developed with experts and over 100 reviewers from published resources of the WHO, Lancet Global Surgery, Disease Control Priorities (3rd edition), International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières, with the following learning objectives to:

- understand the implications of the unmet needs for timely access to safe and quality surgical care services within health systems,
- identify public health solutions to surgical care crisis at all levels of healthcare, including humanitarian crises, and
- understand ways to strengthen surgical care systems towards achieving UHC.

Target audience is anyone interested in public health including surgical care services in maternal and child health, noncommunicable and communicable diseases, and humanitarian crises.

It takes approximately four hours to complete at one's own pace with four modules:

1. Global Impact of surgical (sexual & reproductive, injuries, anesthesia) care.
2. Surgical care in humanitarian crisis.
3. Quality and safety in surgical (sexual & reproductive, injuries, anesthesia) care for UHC.
4. Crucial role of surgical care in the context of UHC.

It is free online with a mandatory registration and MCQ test which allows self-evaluation and learning progress. Participants can upgrade (with a fee which was reduced due to the challenging

times of COVID-19 Pandemic) in order to obtain a certificate which includes 4 CPD credits approved by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, following an MCQ test (repeated until 70% score) and a short assignment.

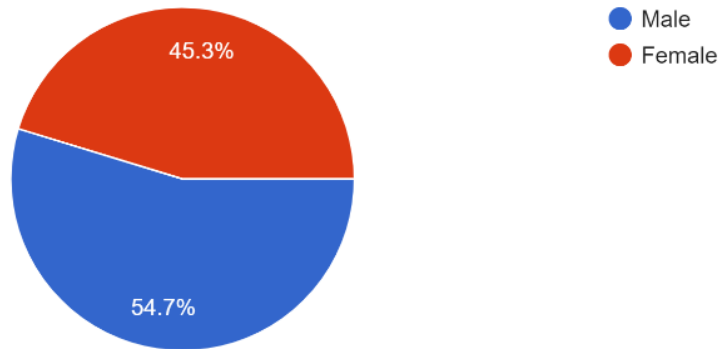
It is aimed to engage people interested to:

- apply evidence-based knowledge for influencing decision-making in policies.
- advocate as a public health issue on a global platform.

To date 1590 participants of diverse disciplines from over 95 countries have registered (graphs below). The outcome of this course has thus far been successful based on the response received from participants who have asked for additional information on surgical care's role as a public health issue.

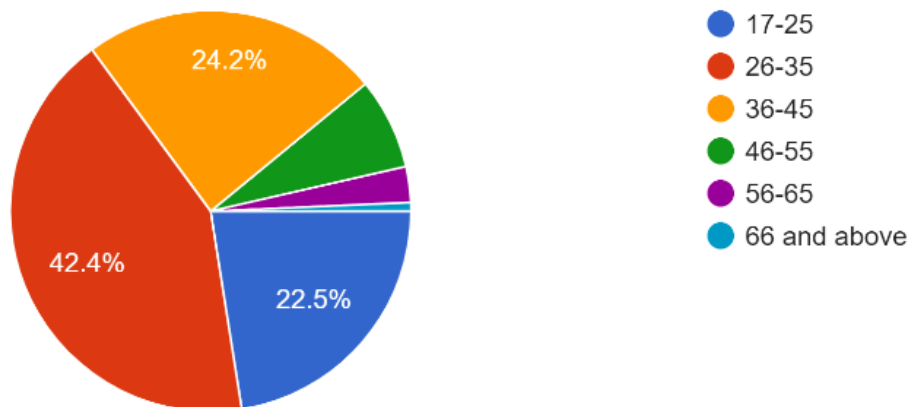
Gender

1,590 responses



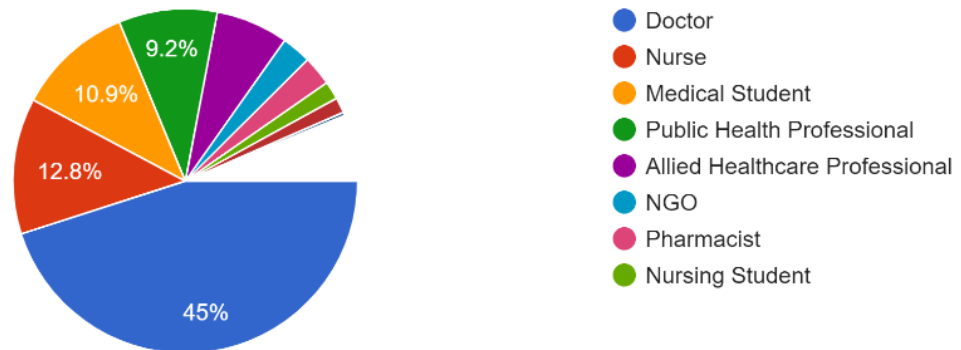
Age in years

1,590 responses



Which of the following closely matches your profile or affiliation? (check one)

1,590 responses



4.3 WHO online COVID-19 courses

Collaborations with WHO Global Learning Open courses added open access COVID-19 courses on GFMER Global Health webpage for a wider outreach.

4.4 Research and Publications of GFMER Global Health New Challenges with Institutional partnerships

<https://www.gfmer.ch/surgery/research.htm>

- The World Health Organization and Neurosurgery. In: Germano, I.M. (eds) Neurosurgery and Global Health. Springer, Cham. 2022. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86656-3_23.
- GFMER Comment for the Cancer Control Publication for London Cancer Control Week UK: "Gaps in health systems became evident globally during the COVID-19 pandemic affecting cancer services hugely despite existing national policies on noncommunicable diseases and essential health services. Empowering communities to demand investments in cancer management in national and district health plans is crucial. GFMER provided free short online public health education on challenges in LMICs, causing one death due to cancer every five seconds, and guiding implementation of evidence-based policy decisions at the grassroots level." Meena N Cherian and Jyotsna Agarwal. Nov. 2022. <http://www.cancercontrol.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/cc2022.pdf>
- User-centred innovation to advance safe surgery at the point of need: report on development of the SurgiField system. BMJ Innovations. 2022; 0:1–6. doi:10.1136/bmjinnov-2021-000893.
- Global Competency and Outcomes Framework for Universal Health Coverage. WHO. 2022. <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/352711/9789240034662-eng.pdf?sequence=1>
- Fake-news-free evidence-based communication for proper vein-lymphatic disease management. Int Angiol. 2023 Apr;42(2):89-189. doi: 10.23736/S0392-9590.23.05044-7. Epub 2023 Mar 17. PMID: 36930179.
- Editing and reviewing the new edition of the WHO Manual Surgical Care at the District Hospital. Nov.2023 Ongoing.

- Book chapter:Principles of Perioperative Safety and Quality on the Global Stage.2023.
- Book chapter:Remote Healthcare Around the World: E Health. 2023 ongoing.

4.5 Partnership/collaboration programs with GFMER Global Health New Challenges

- Collaborations for online courses with UN Global Surgery Learning Hub. Ongoing 2023
- SurgiBox Inc is a Collaborating Partner of GFMER. It is an innovative medical technology with the mission to make surgery safer globally. It consists of a sterile inflatable SurgiBubble with a High Efficiency Particulate Air filtered air and operated by a battery providing an operating room anywhere in the world. ‘SurgiBox Usability Global Surgery Workshop’ was held at the Utah University (UU) Hospital, the UU Childrens Hospital, and the UU Intermountain Education Centre, USA. March 2022.
- WHO Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) Human Reproduction Program (HRP) ‘Gender and Human Rights Issue Sexual and Reproductive Health’. During the three-day online meeting discussions allowed participants to add comments, therefore, the GFMER’s interest in education and training courses was highlighted in the comment section. Geneva, Switzerland. May 2022.
- World Congress on Phlebology. Closing Remarks by GFMER for the Education Working Group. Dubai. Sept.2022
- Talk Global Action SIOG: Communicating Cancer Research for Evidence-informed Policy Decisions to reduce inequities in Cancer Care to Older Adults, at the United Nations-International Society of Geriatric Oncology (SIOG)-Policy Meeting United Nations Palais, Geneva, Switzerland. Oct.2022.

4.6 GFMER Global Health New Challenges representation in global conferences/meetings and education programs.

GFMER Global Health New Challenges Program participated in the following meetings including some in collaboration with GFMER partners:

- Guest Lecture Unite Scientific Aging International Conference. Rome, Italy. June 2023.
- Guest Lecture. International Cancer Congress Sept. Rome Italy. Sept. 2023.
- Meeting of the Policy and Coordination Committee (PCC) of the UNDP / UNFPA / UNICEF / WHO / World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction. Geneva, Switzerland. April 2023.
- WHO UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. UN Palais Geneva, Switzerland. Nov. 2023.
- Expert Panel Consultations of Health Information For All (HIFA, partners of GFMER) Discussion Forum Tobacco: To enable inclusion of community participation in policies. March 2023
- HRP Joint PCC Intersession Meeting STAG, GAP, WHO. Geneva, Switzerland Nov. 2023.
- HIFA: Strengthening primary health care in a decentralized health system. Participation: Q1 Digital Technology to empower Older Ageing Pop. Q2 Alliance/opposition from Private Health Sectors. 13oct.
- International Federation Alliance Global Café Meeting Discussion on: How can we have collaborations/programs for Health Education for Older Adults? Oct. 2023.
- International College of Surgeons – European Federation Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland. May 2023.
- Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland Global Surgery Chair Selection Panel. Aug. 2022.

- Keynote Lecture on 'How can we prioritise an early interest in academic publications?' at the Webinar on 'Research Publications' by D. Y. Patil University Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre in collaboration with the United Nations Association of the USA, and GFMER. India. 6 Sept. 2022.

5. Institutional partnerships

GFMER collaborative activities with Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute (OMPHI) and Harvard Maternal Health Taskforce

<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/index.htm>

<https://intergrowth21.com/geneva-foundation-medical-education-and-research>

The evidence-based management of Pre-eclampsia and Eclampsia

<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/preeclampsia-eclampsia/index.htm>

This is the first online training course developed by OMPHI and GFMER in June 2011 available in Spanish and English.

Upon request from OMPHI, GFMER updated the course and made it available to OMPHI and The Global Health Network (TGHN) in 2023. The updated course is available in English.

Till December 2023, a total of 3522 health professionals from 120 countries have successfully completed the training and knowledge assessment and have been awarded certificates.

The evidence-based management of postpartum haemorrhage

<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/pph/index.htm>

This course is available in English, Spanish and Russian. Its dissemination continued during 2023. Since its launch in June 2013 till December 2023, a total of 3582 health professionals from 128 countries have successfully completed the training and knowledge assessment and have been awarded certificates.

Maternal infections

<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/maternal-infections/index.htm>

This course is available in English. The dissemination of the module continued during 2023. Since the launch of the module in June 2015, up to 2235 health professionals from up to 90 countries have successfully completed the knowledge assessment for the module and were awarded certificates.

Obstetric fistula

<https://www.gfmer.ch/fistula/Obstetric-fistula-2015.htm>

The fistula module dissemination continued in the current year in English and French. Since its launch in July 2015, up to 1552 health professionals from up to 90 countries have successfully completed the knowledge assessment for the module and were awarded certificates. The update of the course is ongoing.

A French version is also available (<https://www.gfmer.ch/fistule/Fistules-obstetricales-2017.htm>).

INTERGROWTH-21st

<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/intergrowth-course/index.htm>

The INTERGROWTH-21st course on maternal, fetal and newborn growth monitoring communicates the methodology of maternal, fetal and newborn growth monitoring and the application of the INTERGROWTH-21st international growth standards to make judgement about appropriateness of growth.

The first module launched in June 2016 “Assessing newborn size by anthropometry” is available in English, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian. The second module “Assessing maternal anthropometry and weight gain during pregnancy” was launched in January 2017 and is available in English and Italian.

The dissemination of the modules continued in 2023. Till date, up to 8934 health professionals from up to 195 countries have successfully completed the knowledge assessment for one or two of the modules and were awarded certificates.

INTERPRACTICE-21st

<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/interpractice/index.htm>

The INTERPRACTICE-21st Project promotes the optimal postnatal growth of preterm infants and standardises growth measurement in selected populations around the world. It is based on the implementation of the INTERGROWTH-21st international standards for preterm postnatal growth and evidence-based feeding recommendations based on human milk.

The “Preterm infant feeding and growth monitoring: Implementation of the INTERGROWTH-21st protocol, interactive e-Learning course” was launched in September 2017. Spanish (<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/interpractice/index-spanish.htm>), Russian (<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/interpractice/index-russian.htm>), Portuguese (<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/interpractice/index-portuguese.htm>) and Italian (<https://www.gfmer.ch/omphi/interpractice/index-italian.htm>) versions of the course are available.

The dissemination of the module continued during 2023. Up to 4665 health professionals from up to 127 countries have so far successfully completed the knowledge assessment for the module and were awarded certificates.

COVID-19 in pregnancy, delivery and the neonatal period

Launched in July 2021, the aim of the course is to provide healthcare providers with evidence-based recommendations for disease prevention and management of pregnant women and their babies during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to reduce the adverse maternal and newborn outcomes. The course is available in English and Spanish.

The dissemination of the module continued in 2023. Till date, up to 1095 health professionals from about 128 countries have successfully completed the knowledge assessment for the module and were awarded certificates.

It is worth mentioning that the above-mentioned modules can also be accessed by Smartphone and tablet. Moreover, a PDF version is also made available for each module to allow for their offline use.

Supporting Women in Science Program – Aga Khan University

In 2022, the joint research project “Supporting Women in Science” was implemented by the Institute for Global Health and Development at the Aga Khan University, Centre for Global Child Health at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), and University of Oxford, with the funding support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (<https://www.aku.edu/ighd/research-programmes/Pages/supporting-women-in-science.aspx>). All seven courses developed by GFMER for OMPHI are selected by the program as part of the “evidence-based practice” courses to be taken by participants which will include early-career women scientists across South-Central Asia and East Africa.

Course in research methodology, research protocol development and scientific writing partnership

As earlier mentioned, in 2023, OMPHI participated in organizing this training course in collaboration with GFMER and WHO. The University of Oxford sponsored four health professionals to take the course.

E-learning modules – Statistics

E-learning module	Language	Duration	No. of unique participants who successful completed the test
Pre-eclampsia and eclampsia	English	June 2011 – December 2023	3522
Postpartum haemorrhage	English, Spanish, Russian	June 2013 – December 2023	3582
Maternal infections	English	May 2015 – December 2023	2235
Obstetric fistula	English, French	July 2015 – December 2023	1552
INTERGROWTH-21st /Assessing newborn size and /Assessing maternal anthropometry and weight gain during pregnancy	English, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish	June 2016 – December 2023	8934
INTERPRACTICE-21st /Assessing preterm infant feeding and growth monitoring	English, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish	September 2017 – December 2023	4665
COVID-19 in pregnancy, delivery and the neonatal period	English, Spanish	July 2021 – December 2023	1095

Activities planned for 2024

Courses on sexual and reproductive health and research 2024

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research in collaboration with the World Health Organization and other partners will continue to offer a series of online training courses in the field of sexual and reproductive health and research in 2024 as follows:

- Adolescent sexual and reproductive health
 - Target WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region
 - Target Francophone South, Central and North Africa
 - Target Latin America
- Family planning in English and French versions
- Female genital mutilation
- Research methodology and research protocol development
- Sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS

Training course in child and adolescent health in humanitarian settings

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research in collaboration with the World Health Organization Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean will develop a new course in child and adolescent health in humanitarian settings, enhancing child and adolescent health outcomes, particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Targeting 11 countries in the region. The course aims to equip program staff to meet reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) needs in humanitarian emergencies.

Sexual health course

This e-learning course on Sexual health developed by GFMER in partnership with the World Health Organisation and UNESCO will be offered to our online course students and it will be disseminated globally to health professionals, through the GFMER and partners' networks.

GFMER collaborative activities with Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute and Harvard Maternal Health Taskforce

1. Dissemination of e-learning courses

GFMER will continue to disseminate all courses through its wide and expanding network of health professionals with ongoing monitoring.

2. Update of e-learning courses

GFMER will propose the update of other existing e-learning courses to its partners as necessary.

Development of new e-learning modules

GFMER and partners will explore the possibility to develop new e-learning modules in sexual and reproductive health and related fields.