

Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research

WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction

Activity report

1 January 2005 - 31 December 2005



WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research is a [WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction](#). The activities carried out include the provision of postgraduate training courses in clinical research in reproductive health and the assistance to partner institutions in the conduct of medical education programmes; the development and conduct of research and research synthesis and the provision of expertise to WHO or to centres of WHO's network requesting collaboration in research, research training or clinical aspects in human reproduction.

Website

The GFMER website is extensive, regularly updated and provides easy access to useful information. The website ([Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research](#)) contains the following:

Languages

English, French, Italian, German, Spanish

Foundation

Information about the mission, objectives and structure of the Foundation

Search

Site and Web search

Education

The postgraduate and continuing education programs of the Foundation

Partners

International collaborations, Foundation's partners

Publications

Publications, presentations, books and atlases

Databases, links

Collection of links to free medical journals, medical schools, dictionaries, search engines, medical images, guidelines and free full text articles

Navigation

Sitemap, list of files in alphabetical order, useful downloads.

See also: [Usage statistics - GFMER](#)

Services offered by the Foundation

GFMER with its pool of experts provides [assistance at all levels](#) of epidemiological research and research training. The spectrum of activities ranges from training in research to research implementation, research synthesis and guideline development to research management by using up-to-date tools and skills.

Degree courses

Postgraduate Research Training Course: 14 February - 25 March 2005

Thirty-four participants from 23 different nations attended the [2005 Training Course in Research in Reproductive Health/ Sexual Health](#). This 6-weeks annual course has been established in 1992 and is jointly conducted with the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), the International association for Maternal and Neonatal Health ([IAMANEH](#)) and the Fonds Universitaire Maurice Chalmieu ([FUMC](#)).

Dissemination of the Postgraduate Research Training in Reproductive Health to Collaborating centres

Following the initiation of the [Postgraduate Training Network for Research in Reproductive Health](#) in September 2003, the PGC in Reproductive Health was disseminated to collaborating centres, taking advantage of the pool of participants trained at the PGC in Geneva to act as local teachers and using the course materials electronically available on the GFMER website.

Argentina

The course took place at the Centro Rosarino de Estudios Perinatales ([CREP](#)), Rosario, from July-December 2005 (over several weekends) and included a videoconference with GFMER during one of the course sessions.

Epidemiology and Public Health: 1-2 December 2005

Twenty-nine students took part in the 2-days course which forms part of the [Masters in Economy and Health and Socio-Health Management](#) endowed by the [Università della Svizzera Italiana](#).

Lectures were held at WHO by Prof A Morabia, Department of Clinical Epidemiology, University of Geneva.

Reproductive Health - the official journal of the Foundation

GFMER hosts the editorial seat of the specialist journal Reproductive Health. In 2005, 33 submitted manuscripts underwent peer review which resulted in 11 publications. Most of the published articles originated from low-resource settings. [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 electronically, thus allowing swifter publication.

Informatics

For the dissemination of the postgraduate courses local expertise and assistance to distant colleagues for the use of online video conferencing was provided. A combination of technologies such as Messengers (of MSN and Yahoo), Netmeeting and VoIP (voice over IP) via Skype and SIPphone was applied for establishing communication. We have innovated slightly by using the FESTOON video extension to Skype in an effort to improve the visual quality. Steps are also underway to incorporate the PowerPoint presentation data in a distributed shared manner. Finally, we are looking at ways to record & archive the video conferences in order to provide access to interested people accessing the foundation website.

More streaming videos have been incorporated onto the website. Website statistics reveal that that our efforts to provide long-run video with low-bandwidth are appreciated by visitors to the site. A user-group of medical informatics experts ([MicTEG](#)) with the goal of disseminating information about informatics solutions used by GFMER has been formed and enlarged with more members. The [E-Learning tools](#) (course-management system) have been put to use in order to stimulate discussion in Laparoscopic surgery, Photomedicine, and Cancer & Aging (in addition to the previously configured online collaboration areas). The initial web-based application for internet based clinical trials ([IBCT](#)) has been developed further is now applied to eight different subjects with incremental improvement occurring on a regular basis. In particular, a collection of standards-operations procedures have been drafted. The online Encyclopedia of medical images has a software versioning application has been implemented to audit changes to the application, and a backup procedure for the online data has been implemented and is used on a regular basis. Further revisions have been made to the online Encyclopedia of medical images (a dynamic PHP/database) to improve its usability and ease-of-use (see [Developmental and genetic diseases](#) and [Selected medical images](#)). A new generic method for quickly developing dynamic databases based on Excel input, is under study.

The list of currently ongoing online medical database projects:

- Misoprostol for the treatment of primary postpartum haemorrhage, Gynuity Health Projects, New York
- Misoprostol project A35042, WHO, Switzerland
- Obstetric Fistula, C-H Rochat, Geneva, Switzerland
- Robotic Laparoscopic Prostatectomy, EGRU, Geneva, Switzerland
- Hepatitis Cohort Study, FValse, Saigon, Vietnam
- Treatment of Mild to Moderate Hypertension for the prevention of pre-eclampsia, WHO/RHR
- Natural Procreative Technology (NPT) Treatment for Infertility or Miscarriage, International Institute for Restorative Reproductive Medicine, Canada

Clinical training, research and guidelines

Publications

See [Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research - Publications, presentations](#) for an up-to-date list of publications from members of the Foundation.

Perinatal education programme: [Maternal care manual](#) - [Newborn care manual](#) (Prof D Woods)

Research and Research Synthesis Activities

The following projects started in 2005 and are ongoing:

- [Measuring Equity to Reproductive Health Services](#) – a joint project between WHO, GFMER, the Universities of Geneva (Switzerland), London (United Kingdom), Western Cape (South Africa) and the Geneva International Academic Network.
- Copper containing IUDs for contraception – a Cochrane systematic review (commissioned by the WHO/ISO committee on specifications for contraceptive devices)

Prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula (Prof C-H Rochat)

GFMER is a partner in the UNFPA/WHO ['Campaign to end fistula'](#). The aim is to create a 'Centre of Excellence for the prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula in Northern Benin, which would serve other countries in the region. This programme is supported by the Ville de Genève and will be conducted in collaboration with WHO and UNFPA.

The objectives of the project are:

- Training local specialists in fistula repair by creating a regional training centre
- Raising awareness about prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula
- Development of research programs

The following activities were carried out in 2005:

- Three missions to Tanguieta Hospital St Jean de Dieu, Northern Benin, during which surgical training for the treatment of obstetric fistula was performed.
- Development of an internet based obstetric fistula data base

See [Obstetric fistula - Charles-Henry Rochat](#).

Training and Research Programme in Laparoscopic Surgery (PD Dr P Meyer)

The overall aim of this program is to improve health care in developing countries. There is still a major gap in the implementation of modern surgical methods in resource-constrained settings, often due to limited availability or access of the equipment and lack of training.

In 2003, the GFMER has begun collaboration with the WHO/Department of Essential Health Technologies and Department of Reproductive Health and Research in order to support the increased use of laparoscopy in a number of partner institutions in resource-constrained countries.

The main points of the programme include:

- Development of an electronic manual for laparoscopy
- Development of training programmes
- Performance of practical teaching courses
- Assessment of research needs and conduct of research programmes.

In 2005, collaboration with the St Petersburg City Oncology Hospital and GFMER has been established and a [training course in oncologic laparoscopic surgery](#) was held in May 2005. Further courses are planned with the next one taking place from [6-17 February 2006](#).

See [Programme for Training and Research in Laparoscopic Surgery - Pierre Meyer](#).

Franco-Vietnamese Association for Liver studies and Education - FValse (Dr J Bengoa, Dr PJ Malé, Dr J Petit, Dr Huy, Dr F Negro)

The aim of the programme is to assist health care professionals in Vietnam on the prevention and treatment of Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C and to provide education programme for health care professionals in this field.

A meeting between members of FValse, GFMER, WHO and other interested parties was held at WHO in December 2005 to setup a [study on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B](#).

See [FValse - Franco Vietnamese Association for Liver Studies and Education](#).

Meetings

Meetings attended at WHO

- January 2005 - 115th WHO Executive Board Session (representing FIGO)
- March 2005: Scientific adviser at the Meeting for inclusion of medicines to the WHO essential drugs list
- May 2005 - World Health Assembly (representing FIGO)
- May 2005 - 116th WHO Executive Board Session (representing FIGO)

Partnerships

See [Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research - International activities and collaborations](#) and [Fondation Genevoise pour la Formation et la Recherche Médicales - Activités et collaborations internationales](#).

Foundation membership

Health professionals interested in collaborating with GFMER can [apply for membership](#).

Benefits of becoming a member:

- Being part of the Foundations' international network
- Receiving assistance for research training activities
- Publishing on the website of the Foundation:
 - Institutional and/or personal page
 - Scientific presentations
 - Possibility of free of charge publications in peer reviewed journals

Duties:

To support the Foundation in its activities:

- In clinical research training
- In the dissemination of knowledge and good quality medical information by the website of the Foundation

Forthcoming issues

1. [Research Training Course in Reproductive Health](#) (20 February - 29 March 2006) Organized in collaboration with the UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Program for Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, Family and Community Health Cluster, and the International Association of Maternal and Neonatal Health (IAMANEH).
2. [Research Training Course in Sexual Health](#) (20 February - 29 March 2006) Organized in collaboration with the Fonds Universitaire Maurice Chalméau and the UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Program for Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, Family and Community Health Cluster,

3. Postgraduate Training Course in Reproductive Health in Argentina (Rosario).
Organized in collaboration with the Centro Rosarino de Estudios Perinatales (CREP).
4. Art for Health: Reducing Maternal and Newborn Mortality. Increasing awareness and promoting action towards safe motherhood and childbirth through art - in collaboration with GFMER, WHO, University of Oslo, University of Texas
5. [Advanced Methods in Epidemiology: History and Concepts: 3-5 January 2006](#) organised in collaboration with the Inter-University Postgraduate Programme in Public Health of the Swiss-German Universities.
6. [Training Course for advanced oncologic laparoscopy](#): organised by GFMER and the City Oncologic Hospital St Petersburg.