

**GENEVA FOUNDATION
FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH**



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Preface by the director

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

For the fifteenth consecutive year, the Foundation and its partners launched a series of distance-learning (online) courses. A total of 230 people from 17 countries participated in the online course on safe abortion for Francophone African regions (“Avortement sécurisé et continuum des DSSR”). A total of 73 health professionals from 31 countries participated in the training program on research methodology, research protocol development, and scientific writing. A total of 225 health professionals from 23 countries participated in the online course on adolescent sexual and reproductive health for Francophone African regions (“Cours en santé sexuelle et reproductive des adolescents”). A total of 100 health professionals from 42 countries participated in the WHO ICFP Scientific Writing, Mentoring and Coaching Course.

GFMER continues its Fistula Group Program, which focuses on surgical training workshops, free patient care, education, clinical supervision, fellowships, material support, and new partnerships. In 2025, GFMER conducted several missions in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Madagascar. Prof. Charles-Henry Rochat, who oversees GFMER's fistula project, and his team of specialists performed surgeries on 208 obstetric fistula cases during workshops and routine surgical practice. Local doctors were also trained in obstetric fistula management. The French version of the Obstetric Fistula course was launched in 2025.

GFMER's online courses, including the Global Health New Challenges course, the sexual health course offered in collaboration with the WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research and the UNESCO Chair of Sexual Health and Human Rights, and the maternal and newborn health courses offered in collaboration with the Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute (OMPHI), continued in 2025.



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)
- PD Dr. Grace Bianchi-Movarekhi
- Dr. Georges Antoine de Boccard

Executive Committee

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

GFMER main fields of activities

Course in safe abortion for Francophone African Regions 2025

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/odas/index.htm>

The ODAS Center (ODAS) is an innovative regional partnership mechanism dedicated to strengthening the safe abortion movement across French-speaking Africa that was launched by Ipas in 2021.

Initiated by ODAS, GFMER developed a training package for an 8-week e-learning course (“Avortement sécurisé et continuum des DSSR”) based on World Health Organization (WHO) guidance and other relevant regional guidelines and resources, in partnership with ODAS and the WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO). This was the maiden edition of the course implemented in French.

The course sought to equip young people from local organizations with relevant knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to evolve into professional roles (employability) within the ecosystem of sexual and reproductive health and rights. It will also empower them to improve adolescents and young people's access to sexual and reproductive health services and information with a focus on abortion in their own country.

The Course Coordinators who were also the members of the course technical committee (CoTECH) were Dr. Bénélic Ulrich Agossou, ODAS; Mme Cécile Thiombiano/Yougbaré, Médecins du Monde, France; Dr. Ginette Hounkanri, Pathfinder International, Burkina Faso; Dr. Leopold Ouedraogo, OMS AFRO; Dr. Melchie Ibula Bwanga, AJCAF-AS; Mme Moinsalima Hassane, ANJSRPF, Sénégal; Mme Saskia Hüsken, Rutgers, Pays-Bas; and Mme Souwaiba Ibrahim, Ligue Nigérienne des Droits des Femmes, Mouvement ODAS. Dr. Raqibat Idris and Mrs Fiona Poon were the GFMER Course Manager and Course Administrator respectively.

Objectives

The aim of the course was to build the capacity of young people and youth organizations on key themes and issues related to work on safe abortion.

Course contents

The development of the course materials was managed by GFMER and funded by ODAS. The content of this course was based on WHO recommendations and the operational guide on safe abortion. Reference materials were also provided to the participants.

The course was a 5 modular course that took place over 8 weeks from 26 May to 20 July 2025.

Week 1

Module 1 : Les bases de l'avortement sécurisé

Week 2

Module 2 : Options de prise en charge et voies d'accès

Week 3 & 4

Module 3 : Histoire de l'avortement dans le monde, en Afrique et panorama du cadre légal relatif à l'avortement dans les pays africains

Week 5 & 6

Module 4 : Approche intersectionnelle et multisectorielle de l'avortement sécurisé

Week 7 & 8

Module 5 : Communiquer sur l'avortement sécurisé, changer le narratif et mitiger l'opposition

Course materials were restricted to registered participants, who used a secure login to access the e-learning platform managed by ODAS.

Course participants

The target audience for the course was young activists from the Francophone Africa region. ODAS nominated and sponsored 230 young people from 17 countries to participate in the course. The majority of participants (65%) were aged 25 to 34 years, and women made up 65% of participants.

Recruitment of participants

ODAS and partners were responsible for the course promotion and for the recruitment of the target young people from youth organizations in Francophone African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte-d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo.

Selection of participants

The course participants were selected by ODAS after submitting their applications. Of the 230 participants, 140 were selected based on their submitted profiles while the remaining 90 participants were nominated by partners of ODAS.

Teachers, partner institutions

Teachers from WHO AFRO, ODAS, GFMER, and other national and international institutions were involved in teaching and tutoring the online course on Safe Abortion.

Coaching

During the course, each participant was assigned a coach to support their learning. A total of 21 coaches from 8 countries were assigned to the 230 participants from their countries or nearby countries.

The coaches' roles were to collect, review, and comment on the participants' assignments and answer any technical questions related to the course.

Coaches interacted with and motivated their students through various means, including email, the Signal group, phone calls, Zoom meetings, and webinars.

Teaching methods

The course was implemented on a customized e-learning platform supported by ODAS. All users were required to log in to the platform to access reading materials and submit assignments.

Teaching methods consisted of online lectures (video recordings, didactic presentations), key readings, reading materials, additional references and referrals to related websites. Five live webinars were organized in which technical experts answered students' questions. In addition, an online opening session to introduce participants to the course and an end of course meeting to reflect on the course were organized.

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 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 (48 hours in total), regardless 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 and participants and coaches were invited to complete separate online course evaluation surveys.

Participants could choose to join the weekly discussion forum on the Google Group. A discussion topic was posted for each module to encourage discussion and sharing of experiences among participants and coaches.

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

Course in research methodology, research protocol development and scientific writing 2025

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/research-methodology/index.htm>

This course was organized in collaboration with the Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health & Research, World Health Organization (WHO) and the Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute (OMPHI).

The Course Coordinators were Dr. Moazzam Ali, WHO; Prof. Jane Hirst, Nuffield Department of Women's & Reproductive Health, University of Oxford; and Dr. Karim Abawi, GFMER. Dr. Raqibat Idris and Mrs Fiona Poon were the GFMER Course Manager and Course Administrator respectively.

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 contents

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/research-methodology/weekly-schedule.htm>

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

The course ran from 3 September to 28 October 2025, totaling 8 weeks. It includes four thematic areas: Literature search and referral to biomedical documents, Epidemiologic studies, Research protocol development and Scientific writing; with eight topics:

Week 1: Introduction: Research topic selection, research question and research problem statement

Week 2: Types of research, effective literature search and citing biomedical documents and sources

Week 3: Epidemiologic studies

Week 4: Systematic review and implementation research

Week 5: Sampling (sample size and sampling technique) and quantitative data collection

Week 6: Qualitative study design

Week 7: Research ethics and critical appraisal of research publication

Week 8: Research protocol development and scientific writing

Course participants

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/research-methodology/participants.htm>

A total of 73 health professionals from 31 countries attended the research methodology, research protocol development, and scientific writing training program. The majority of participants (45%) were aged 35 to 44 years (Table 1), and 56% were men (Table 2).

Table 1: Age of participants

Age range	No. of participants	%
18-24	1	1%
25-34	20	27%
35-44	33	45%
45-54	14	19%
>55	5	7%
Total	73	100%

Table 2: Gender of participants

Gender	No. of participants	%
Female	32	44%
Male	41	56%
Total	73	100%

This course was attended by health professionals mainly from Africa (55%), Eastern Mediterranean (22%), Europe (10%), America (10%), South-East Asia (3%), and Western Pacific (1%) (Table 3).

Table 3: Geographic distribution of participants by WHO Regions

WHO Regions	No. of participants	%
African Region (AFR)	40	55%
Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR)	16	22%
European Region (EUR)	7	10%
Region of the Americas (AMR)	7	10%
South-East Asian Region (SEAR)	2	3%
Western Pacific Region (WPR)	1	1%
Total	73	100%

Table 4 shows the proportions between the different professions, with the largest group of participants being physicians (32%). The majority came from government organizations (32%) (Table 5).

Table 4: Participants' professions

Profession	No. of participants	%
Medical doctor	23	32%
Professor / Lecturer / Researcher	15	21%
Program Management / Implementation	11	15%
Midwife / Nurse	8	11%
Allied Health	6	8%
Government Official	5	7%
Student - Nursing /Midwifery / Medical	3	4%
Social scientists / Social Worker	1	1%
Human right / SRHR advocate	0	0%
Others	1	1%
Total	73	100%

Table 5: Distribution of participants by type of organization

Organization type	No. of participants	%
Government organizations	23	32%
Academic sectors	16	22%
Local NGOs	8	11%
Government Hospitals / Clinics / Medical offices	7	10%
Private organizations	6	8%
International NGOs	5	7%
International organizations	2	3%
Non-government Hospitals / Clinics / Medical offices	2	3%
Others	1	1%
Total	73	100%

Recruitment of participants

Participants became aware of the course in the following ways:

- Promotion of the course by the local coordinators of the GFMER in the countries and regions concerned.
- Promotion of the course on the GFMER website and on partner websites.
- Mobilization of the GFMER and WHO networks. These included WHO regional/country offices, local and international NGOs, WHO collaborating centers at the country level, health ministries, and universities.

Due to a high number of requests for sponsorship, GFMER offered fee waiver to 30 participants partly made possible by coaches who volunteered to coach for free. The other participants were either self-sponsored or sponsored by their organizations/ supporting institutions.

Selection of participants

Participants were selected on the basis of the application form and the documents provided. Sponsored participants were nominated by their institutions or other organizations. The participants or their employers were then contacted by our Geneva team. The list of candidates was sent to the country coordinators/tutors, who also contacted the candidates.

Teachers, partner institutions

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

Coaching

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/research-methodology/tutors.htm>

A total of 11 coaches from 10 countries were assigned to work with the 73 participants from their own countries or nearby ones during the course. Six of the coaches volunteered their time.

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 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. Three 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 and participants and coaches were invited to complete separate online course evaluation surveys. An online end of course session was also held for participants, coaches, course resource persons and course organizers to reflect on the course.

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

Course in adolescent sexual and reproductive health for Francophone African Regions 2025

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/ssra/index.htm>

The 2025 online training course in adolescent sexual and reproductive health (Cours en santé sexuelle et reproductive des adolescents 2025): “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 second edition of the course implemented in French only.

The Course Coordinators were Dr. Venkatraman Chandra-Mouli, Independent Expert on Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health; Dr. Chilanga Asmani, Family Planning Programme and Policy Adviser, United Nations Population Fund; Dr. Ginette Hounkanrin, Senior Manager - Health Systems and Services, Children's Investment Fund Foundation; and Dr Leopold Ouedraogo, Regional SRHR Advisor, WHO AFRO. 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 contents

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/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. WHO AFRO engaged the consultant who updated the content and the process was coordinated by GFMER.

The course ran from 8 October to 2 December 2025, totaling 8 weeks. It includes 8 topics:

Week 1: Comprehensive sexuality education provision

Week 2: Contraception counselling and provision

Week 3: Antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal care

Week 4: Safe abortion care

Week 5: Sexually transmitted infections (STIs): prevention and care

Week 6: Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV): prevention and care

Week 7: Violence against women and girls: prevention, support and care

Week 8: Harmful traditional practices: prevention

Course participants

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/ssra/participants.htm>

Working in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO), GFMER recruited a total of 225 health professionals from 23 countries for the course. They were from diverse backgrounds but mainly from low- and middle-income countries in the Francophone Africa region, involved in the area of sexual and reproductive health. The majority of participants (35%) were aged 35 to 44 years (Table 1), and participation was evenly shared between women and men (50% each) (Table 2).

Table 1: Age of participants

Age range	No. of participants	%
18-24	5	2%
25-34	77	34%
35-44	79	35%
45-54	55	24%
>55	9	4%
Total	225	100%

Table 2: Gender of participants

Gender	No. of participants	%
Female	112	50%
Male	113	50%
Total	225	100%

This course was attended by health professionals mainly from West Africa (66%), Central Africa (27%), East Africa (4%) and North Africa (1%) (Table 3).

Table 3: Geographic distribution of participants by WHO Francophone African Regions

WHO Francophone African Regions	No. of participants	%
West Africa	148	66%
Central Africa	61	27%
East Africa	8	4%
North Africa	7	1%
Caribbean	1	0%
Horn of Africa	1	0%
North America	1	0%
Northwest Africa	1	0%
Southeastern Africa	1	0%
Southern Africa	1	0%
Total	225	100%

Table 4 shows the proportions between the different professions, with the largest group of participants being physicians (44%). The majority came from government organizations (26%) (Table 5).

Table 4: Participants' professions

Profession	No. of participants	%
Medical doctor	99	44%
Program Management / Implementation	40	18%
Midwife / Nurse	34	15%
Allied Health	11	5%
Social scientists / Social Worker	11	5%
Human right / SRHR advocate	9	4%
Student - Nursing /Midwifery / Medical	9	4%
Government Official	8	4%
Professor / Lecturer / Researcher	3	1%
Others	1	0%
Total	225	100%

Table 5: Distribution of participants by type of organization

Organization type	No. of participants	%
Government organizations	58	26%
International NGOs	35	16%
Government Hospitals / Clinics / Medical offices	29	13%
Local NGOs	28	12%
International organizations	25	11%
Civil societies	13	6%
Academic sectors	10	4%
Private organizations	6	3%
Non-government Hospitals / Clinics / Medical offices	3	1%
Others	18	8%
Total	225	100%

Recruitment of participants

Participants became aware of the course in the following ways:

- Promotion of the course by the local coordinators of the GFMER in the countries and regions concerned.
- Promotion of the course on the GFMER website and on partner websites.

Mobilization of the GFMER and WHO networks. WHO Regional Office for Africa nominated 35 candidates from 14 countries to the course (Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Senegal), who were health professionals from WHO regional / country offices, local and international NGOs and 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. Some 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.

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/2025-courses/ssra/tuteurs.htm>

During the course, a coach was assigned to each participant to facilitate their learning. A total of 22 coaches from 13 Francophone African countries were assigned to the 225 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. Four live webinars were organized during the course where experts responded to questions received from participants on the course topics. In addition, an online course introduction session and an end of course meeting to reflect on the course were held.

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 and participants and coaches were invited to complete separate online course evaluation surveys.

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

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank a private Swiss foundation and the GFMER Fistula Group for its support in making this course possible.

WHO ICFP Scientific Writing, Mentoring and Coaching Course 2025

<https://www.gfmer.ch/2025-courses/scientific-writing/index.htm>

This 2nd edition of the training course that is organized in collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health and the Department of SRH (including HRP), World Health Organization (WHO) with the goal for participants to develop the motivation, skills, and confidence to write a high-quality scientific manuscript on a family planning topic. The course targeted junior scientists who had accepted abstracts at [ICFP 2025](#). It is aimed that most participants will submit their manuscripts to a peer-reviewed journal within six months of the conference. It is anticipated that a large proportion of these submissions will be accepted for publication within 12 months.

The course links with ongoing global capacity-building efforts at [ICFP 2025](#). The first edition of the course was held in 2022 (<https://www.gfmer.ch/SRH-Course-2022/scientific-writing/index.htm>). A journal article highlighted the lessons learnt from the course (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39793944/>). The second edition of the course will build on these lessons.

Longer-term, the course aims to develop the research capacity of LMIC scientists and practitioners working in family planning.

The course is organized in hybrid format, with four face-to-face training sessions during the 2025 [International Conference on Family Planning \(ICFP\)](#) in Bogotá, Colombia from 03 November 2025 to 06 November 2025, followed by online coaching with webinars in the first 6 months after the conference. During the conference, participants had an opportunity to meet experts for further discussion on their abstract. Subject experts were identified as per the theme of the conference. GFMER is charged with organizing and managing the coaching and webinars which started on 27 November 2025 and will end on 20 May 2026. Two webinars will be organized in February and April 2026 to respond to questions from participants and to share experiences on manuscript writing. The post conference coaching and webinar program is being sponsored by WHO.

Objectives

The objectives of the course are for trainees at the end of the course to:

1. Be aware of the parts of a scientific manuscript and the fundamentals of good scientific writing.
2. Have the skills to craft a scholarly and lucid argument.
3. Develop their abstract into a scientific manuscript and navigate the process for submission and peer review.
4. Participate in a network of junior scientists, facilitators and mentors who have similar interests.

Course participants

A total of 100 health professionals from 42 countries who attended the training and mentoring sessions of the course during the ICFP 2025 were taken into the 6-month coaching and webinar program. The participants were selected by WHO and the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute based on their abstract topics. Majority of the participants are female (67%) (Table 1) and from WHO African Region (Table 2).

Table 1: Gender of participants

Gender	No. of participants	%
Female	67	67%
Male	33	33%
Total	100	100%

Table 2: Geographic distribution of participants by WHO Regions

WHO Regions	No. of participants	%
African Region (AFR)	51	51%
Region of the Americas (AMR)	21	21%
South-East Asian Region (SEAR)	18	18%
European Region (EUR)	7	7%
Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR)	2	2%
Western Pacific Region (WPR)	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Coaching

The 100 young scientists were assigned to 13 coaches from 11 countries. The roles of coaches are to:

1. To guide participants through the development of their manuscripts towards submission to a peer-reviewed journal and
2. To help participants prepare responses to any query during the peer review process

Certification

Participants who attended the training sessions during the ICFP and participated in the 6-month post-conference webinars and coaching will receive the course certificate signed by the organizing institutions.

Clinical training, prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula

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

<https://www.gfmer.ch/fistula/pdf/2025-activity-report-fistula-group-program.pdf>



General

In 2025, the GFMER “obstetric fistulas” program, called Fistula Group, made it possible to carry out field activities in the form of surgical workshops and to support a large number of doctors in their training as well as in their clinical practice.

Field surgical activities also covered repair of urogenital prolapse as well as men’s urological conditions, mainly prostate operations and traumatic urethral stricture surgery.

In terms of equipment provision and support to infrastructure, the focus was mainly on Tanguiéta Hospital in Benin.

Surgical workshops

For 2025, 208 patients were operated on within the missions coordinated or supported by our program.

Benin: a surgical mission led in April 2025 at Tanguiéta Hospital by Dr Charles-Henry Rochat enabled surgery on 48 patients.

<https://www.gfmer.ch/fistule/pdf/rapport-de-mission-tanguieta-avril-mai-2025.pdf>

<https://www.gfmer.ch/fistula/pdf/mission-report-tanguieta-april-may-2025.pdf>

The mission planned for October was moved to Cotonou and Parakou, due to insecurity in the Tanguiéta area.

Cameroon: a surgical workshop in March 2025 took place in Yaoundé under the leadership of Professor Pierre-Marie TEBEU, during which 17 patients were operated on for fistulas.

A second surgical workshop was planned for October and then moved to February 2026.

Burkina Faso: given the closure of the border between Burkina Faso and Benin, patients with obstetric fistulas can no longer be admitted to Tanguiéta. Since 2019 we have therefore financed

part of the cost of these procedures at Sainte-Camille Clinic in Ouagadougou, under the responsibility of Dr Moussa Guirro. 143 patients were able to be operated on during 2025.

Madagascar: due to a coup d'état in October, it was not possible to maintain the mission planned for the end of the year.

However, we sent Dr Martin Randriantsalama twice on assessment and reconnaissance missions lasting more than 6 weeks in total.

Equipment and infrastructure support

Financial support was allocated mainly to Tanguiéta Hospital, with refurbishment of the Clinic building, consumables for the operating theatre, and purchase of parts to repair the CT scanner.

Training and clinical supervision scholarships

We support three urologists in their specialization pathway in Cotonou and Dakar, and two students at École Polytechnique in Paris. Support for senior physicians at Tanguiéta Hospital is provided through clinical supervision scholarships, since they are responsible for training residents (DES) in different specialties.

This line item has grown significantly in our program, which relies heavily on the next generation.

Recruitment and follow-up organizations

This very important activity of recruiting and following up patients is carried out in Benin by the Claudine TALON Foundation, but we also support local initiatives in Burkina Faso and in the Tanguiéta region.

Scientific activities, publications and conferences

The Tanguiéta model is structured around treatment, training, recruitment and follow-up, prevention and social reintegration. There is also a scientific component: in 2025, we were able to fund a course on adolescent sexual and reproductive health organized by GFMER and the WHO, and we also funded the dissemination of the online course on obstetric fistulas in French.

The French version of the course was launched in mid November 2025. By end of December 2025, 100 participants from 13 Francophone African countries completed the course and obtained certificates. The course is continuing open access in GFMER website for health professionals.

French version: <https://www.gfmer.ch/fistule/fistule-obstetricale-2025.htm>

English version: <https://www.gfmer.ch/fistula/obstetric-fistula-2024.htm>

In May, Professor Pierre Marie Tebeu took part, with GFMER's support, in organizing the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula in Yaoundé.

<https://www.figo.org/events/figo-webinars/closing-obstetric-fistula-treatment-gap>

He also published a book on good practices in obstetrics.

<https://www.editions-harmattan.fr/catalogue/livre/mes-grands-pas-en-gynecologie/78138>

Two of our urologists in training, Drs Randriantsalama and Kikwaya, were able to attend the French Association of Urology congress in Paris in November, accompanied by Dr Rochat.

Dr Martin Randriantsalama graduated in Urology in Dakar in June and, while waiting to start a fellowship, is contributing to the drafting of scientific articles with a GFMER affiliation.

Our partners in 2025

During the year, we were fortunate to receive support from two new foundations (Nordia Foundation and Greendale Foundation) and the return of the Lotti Latrous Foundation, the Global Foundation for Life Sciences, as well as a private Swiss foundation.

The other foundations, Topaze, Inspir', Alfred and Eugénie Baur, Rumsey Cartier, Pharos Trust and the Teofilo Rossi Montelera and Di Premuda Foundations, as well as private donors, remained loyal. Thanks to this, we can approach 2026 with peace of mind.

Outlook for 2026

We will strive to find bridging funding for scholarships and clinical supervision support, given that some foundations are reaching the end of their commitment. Financial support for senior physicians in Tanguiéta is all the more relevant as the security situation is not improving, which makes working conditions difficult. The hospital must remain competitive in terms of salaries, while its revenues are also affected by insecurity: patients travel less and often arrive in desperate conditions and without financial means.

We will continue to support fistula surgery in Benin, but at other sites. This should not prevent me, personally, from carrying out a mission to Tanguiéta in May, in particular for general urology cases.

We are considering resuming collaborations for obstetric fistula surgery in Madagascar, but also in Chad and in Guinea-Conakry.

A lightweight website is being prepared for Fistula Group, and in the meantime, we will continue to publish newsletters that will be relayed on the GFMER website.

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

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

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

Obstetric fistula

<https://www.gfmer.ch/fistula/obstetric-fistula-2024.htm>

<https://www.gfmer.ch/fistule/fistule-obstetricale-2025.htm>

The fistula module dissemination continued in 2025. The module was launched in July 2015 in English and French. The English version was updated in October 2024. A new questionnaire and feedback survey were introduced for research purposes. Since the launch of the module till December 2025, a total of 1805 health professionals from up to 90 countries have successfully completed the knowledge assessment for the module and were awarded certificates. In mid November 2025, the French version was launched and was promoted to the Francophone African Regions. A total of 100 health professionals from 13 countries have successfully completed the knowledge assessment for the module and were 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 2025. Since its launch in June 2013 till December 2025, a total of 3797 health professionals from 128 countries have successfully completed the training and knowledge assessment and have been awarded certificates.

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. In 2023, the course was updated and is available in English. Its dissemination continued during 2025.

A total of 4583 health professionals from 120 countries have so far 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 2025. Since the launch of the module in June 2015, up to 2780 health professionals from up to 90 countries have successfully completed the knowledge assessment for the module and were awarded certificates.

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 2025. Till date, up to 11654 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 optimal postnatal growth for preterm infants and the use of standardized growth measurements among selected populations worldwide. 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 2025. Up to 5341 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 2025. Till date, up to 1404 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

OMPHI participated in organizing this training course in collaboration with GFMER and WHO.

GFMER collaborative activities with WHO and UNESCO

Sexual Health

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

This e-learning course on Sexual health developed by GFMER in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNESCO was offered to our online course students and disseminated globally to health professionals, through the GFMER and partners' networks.

This course is available in English since February 2024. Till December 2025, a total of 1346 health professionals from 93 countries have successfully completed the training and knowledge assessment and have been awarded certificates.

E-learning modules – Statistics

E-learning module	Language	Start year	No. of unique participants who successfully completed the test
Pre-eclampsia and eclampsia	English	2011	4583
Postpartum haemorrhage	English, Spanish, Russian	2013	3797
Maternal infections	English	2015	2780
Obstetric fistula	English, French	2015	1903
INTERGROWTH-21st - Maternal, fetal and newborn growth monitoring	English, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish	2016	11654
INTERPRACTICE-21st - Assessing preterm infant feeding and growth monitoring	English, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish	2017	5341
COVID-19 in pregnancy, delivery and the neonatal period	English, Spanish	2021	1404
Sexual health	English	2024	1346

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>

In the last decade, surgical care has been propelled into the public health domain with the establishment of a World Health Organization's (WHO) first designated program on Emergency and Essential Surgical Care (former Lead, Meena Nathan Cherian), and key publications. This resulted in the passing of the first historic World Health Assembly Resolution (WHA), which acknowledged surgical care as a vital component towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The GFMER Global Health New Challenges conducted the first worldwide survey to explore the perception of surgical care as a public health issue.

Research was coordinated by the GFMER in collaboration with the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre, USA, on the 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 of the importance of surgical care as a public health issue. This led to the development 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 academia, the World Health Organization (WHO), and International Scientific Organizations.

These short, self-paced online public health courses create awareness of global public health issues and promote education by highlighting key messages from evidence-based publications, specifically those from the WHO, for an easy understanding of the impact of the global burden of disease and the policies addressing it.

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.
- 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 partnered with the Health Volunteer Overseas in the USA, enabling 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 since 2024:

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 prioritize 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 for everyone when needed; and
- The burden of cancer can be reduced with integrated, people-centered care with a multidisciplinary approach.

Developed in partnerships with academic [experts](#) and over 90 reviewers, it provides 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 a multidisciplinary approach at all levels of healthcare.
- Policies for an integrated people-centered cancer care, including strengthening surgical systems towards achieving UHC.

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

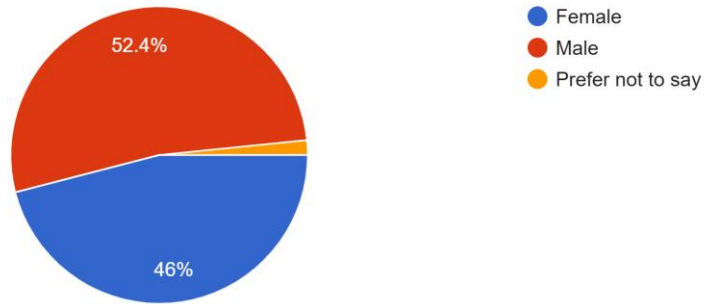
It takes approximately one hour to complete at one's own pace and contains three modules:

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 mandatory registration. A certificate is provided after completion of the course, a short assignment, and an MCQ test (before and after the course, which allows evaluation of the knowledge gained. To date, 124 participants from 32 countries have registered.

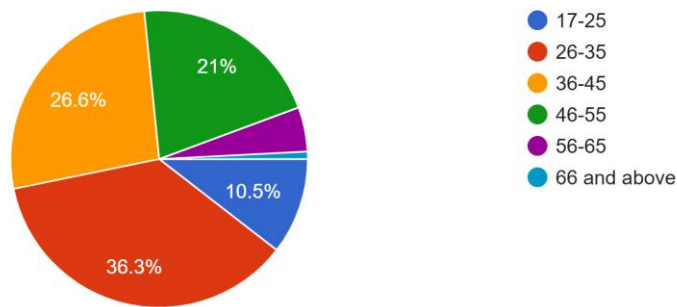
Gender

124 responses



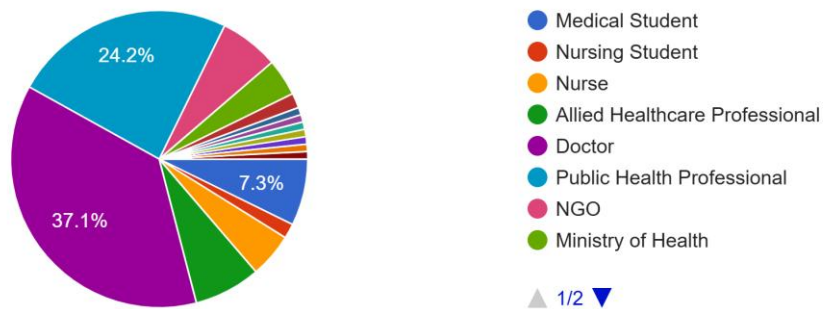
Age in Years

124 responses



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

124 responses



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

This course provides an understanding of timely, safe surgical care services in reaching SDG 3.

The course highlights the following:

- Five billion people lack access to basic life-saving surgical care, and it is still not considered 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 is 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:

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

The 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. The 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 the 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.

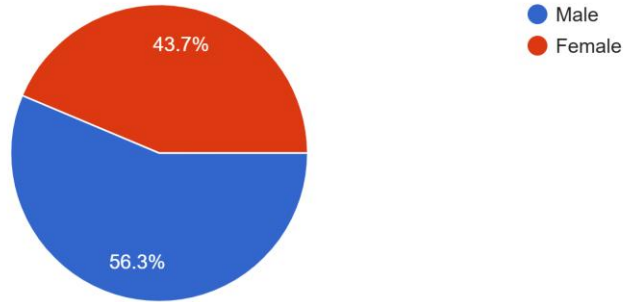
It is aimed at engaging people interested in:

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

Globally, there is growing interest in understanding how surgical care services are integral to public health. To date, 1784 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 the role of surgical care as a public health issue.

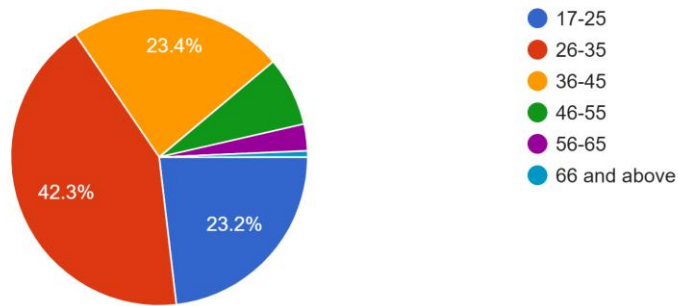
Gender

1,784 responses



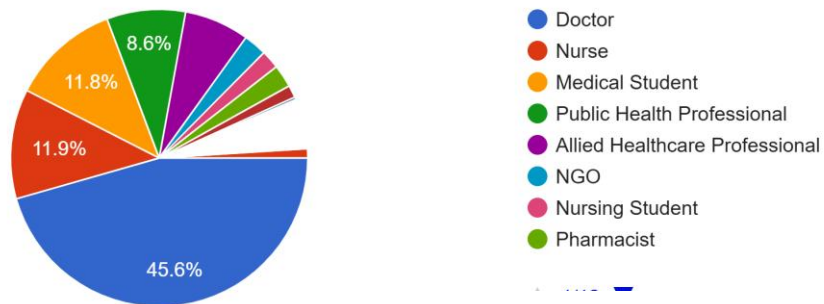
Age in years

1,784 responses



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

1,784 responses



WHO online COVID-19 courses

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

Research and Publications of GFMER Global Health New Challenges with Institutional Partnerships

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

- Springer Book 'Remote Consultation in Primary Care' published book chapter 'Remote Healthcare Around the World', Dec.2025.
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-89661-3>
- WHO EPI-WIN: UNiTE end digital violence 1 Dec.2025.
- Book 'Principles of Perioperative Safety and Efficiency'. Book Chapter on Principles of Perioperative Safety and Quality on the Global Stage. GFMER Meena Nathan Cherian June 2024.
[Principles of Perioperative Safety and Efficiency | SpringerLink](#)
- WHO Global Patient Safety Report 2024: GFMER Meena Nathan Cherian External Reviewer.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240095458#:~:text=Global%20Patient%20Safety%20Report%202024%20report%20presents%20a,across%20the%20world%2C%20specific%20regions%20and%20individual%20countries.> [Global patient safety report 2024](#)
- The World Health Organization and Neurosurgery. In: Germano, I.M. (eds) Neurosurgery and Global Health. Springer, Cham. 2022. GFMER Meena Nathan Cherian.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-86656-3_23.
- Editing and reviewing the new edition of the WHO Manual of Surgical Care at the District Hospital. Nov.2023-2024 ongoing.
- Cancer Control Publication for London Cancer Control Week. UK, GFMER Team Comment Meena Nathan Cherian; Jyotsna Agarwal: 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.
<https://innovations.bmj.com/content/bmjinnov/8/4/317.full.pdf>
- 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.

Partnership/Collaborations/Consultations with GFMER Global Health New Challenges

The Global Health New Challenges collaborates and partners with several Organizations as follows:

- WHO Global Patient Safety Consultations. Jan 2024

- HIFA mHealth Innovative Research on Civil Society’s Evidence-Generating Role for Health Policy Consultations. May 2024.
- WHO Consultation on Post Pregnancy Family Planning: GFMER Global Health New Challenges contributed to the discussions and provided four comments: i. culture environment gender bias male foetus; ii. education awareness tools, online courses iii. Training of health providers IV. safe perioperative care (surgical, obstetrics, anaesthesia services). June 2024.
- Research consultations to study patients' knowledge of anaesthesia and their perception of participation in their own perioperative safety. Jan 2024.
- Health for All (HIFA) mHealth Innovate Consultations: research on the use of mobile technology. Sept. 2024.
- WONCA eHealth Webinar on Telemedicine and Telehealth: Transforming Healthcare in the Digital Age. June 2024.
- WHO EURO Mini-Conference. Population Health Management: Harnessing the Power of Data to Strengthen PHC. GFMER provided comments i. Emphasis on involving clinical care provides with public health. ii. Should include training of PHC providers, which is crucial to address equity in access to quality health services. iii Population Health Management will not be possible unless 'data' systems are supported through 'behavioural change' resulting in ' population cultural change'.
- European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies Webinar: Health and health system effects on poverty. Co-benefits from health and health systems to education. Oct.2024.
- WHO webinar One Health education: prepare the workforce for effective implementation. Nov. 2024.
- World Health Innovation Summit. Nov. 2024.
- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Humanitarian Crises, ELRHA Study: SRHR Experts Regional Meeting Priority Research Questions. Nov. 2024.
- Health Information For All (HIFA) Supporting Organisations (SOs) Meeting. GFMER Meena Nathan Cherian coordinated the Discussion forum; GFMER is HIFA SO. Nov. 2024
- Joint Intersession WHO meeting of Policy Coordination Committee (PCC), STAG, GAP, and the AAB. Dec. 2024.
- 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 Children’s 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.

GFMER Global Health New Challenges representation in international conferences/meetings, and education programs

GFMER Global Health New Challenges Program (Meena Nathan Cherian) participated in the following meetings/programs, including collaborations with GFMER partners:

- Delphi Panel of the European Cancer Patient Digital Centre (ECPDC) Information Portal (EU-CIP), Jan. 2025.
- WHO Ageing ICOPE launch. 29 Jan. HIFA, GFMER

Question proposed in the meeting: Is there an opportunity for collaborations to promote ICOPE to communities globally?

- WHO EPW2 Hearings - Shape the Future of Health in Europe. Discussion theme: securing Primary Health Care's (PHC) role as the cornerstone of the future health care system. Jan. 2025.
- GFMER is a Supporting Organization/Partner of the Global Health Network- Health Information for All (HIFA), an international NGO, in official relations with WHO, Jan. 2025.
- WHO EPW2, 'Ageing is living working for a lifetime of health and well-being'. Strengthening prevention of NCDs: Eliminating barriers to good health at all stages of life. The following comments were made by Meena Nathan Cherian in the meeting: Jan 2025.
 - i. Investments in reliable health education and healthcare services through digital mobile technology in an ageing population to reduce misinformation.
 - ii. Investments in access to health services for the ageing population.
- SIOG Committee Policy Consultation towards a Paper for Communicating Cancer Research for Evidence-informed Policy Decisions to include older adults as a risk factor for cancer. Feb. 2025.
- WHO PMNCH webinar: Addressing the impacts of climate change on maternal, newborn, and child health and building climate-resilient societies. Climate change is threatening decades of progress and improvements in maternal, newborn, and child health, further widening the gap to reach the SDG targets. Feb.2025.
- WHO EPIWIN: Transforming IPC Practice: New Tools and Implementation Approaches for Outbreak Preparedness and Response. The following question was proposed by Meena in the meeting: Feb. 2025.
 - i. What are the challenges you come across at the PHC level for building capacities for IPC?
 - ii. Presenter responded: Some of the challenges that are faced at the PHC level in terms of implementing IPC are: staff attrition, limited resources (environmental, WASH, consumables), and communication, to name a few.
- WHO workshop series for developing national medical oxygen scale-up plans: Health Workforce. March 2025.
- GFMER becomes a partner organization of HIFA. GFMER participated in the HIFA Global Thematic Discussions Forum, April-May 2025.
- WHO EURO Webinar: Strengthening Telemedicine: Sustainable Practices and Policy Pathways for Health Systems. April 2025.
- WHO Integrated Health Services (IHS) and Global Health Partnerships (GHP) (formerly THET), April 2025.
- Keynote Speaker 'Ensuring Older People's health is critical to achieve Universal Health Coverage', Unite Scientific Ageing Conference, Vienna, Austria, April 2025.

- WHO HRP 38th Policy and Coordination Committee (PCC) meeting (as a GFMER Observer), April 2025.
- World Health Assembly (WHA) Side-event: Global Surgery Movement (International College of Surgeons and G4 Alliance), Keynote Speaker: 'Bringing the Operating Room to the Public Health Arena: Journey of a WHO Surgical program to a historic WHA Resolution'. May 2025.
- Delivered a statement representing HIFA at Committee A, Universal Health Coverage Item 13.3, 78th WHA, 25 June 2025.
- WHO EPIWIN Civil Society Organisations (CSO) webinar: WHO guidance on evidence for community protection in public health emergencies - CSO consultation. June 2025.
- WHO Global Patient Safety Webinar on Patient Safety Incident Reporting and Learning Systems (PSIRLS). Establishing robust PSIRLS is critical for identifying risks, preventing harm, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. July 2025.
- Keynote Address (including GFMER and HIFA projects) at the Fundraising Event of the Christian Medical College, Ludhiana, Brisbane, Australia, Aug. 2025.
- Global Health Exhibition: Innovative Technologies, SurgiBox. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Oct. 2025.
- Policy and Coordination Committee (PCC) Intersessional Meeting, Nov. 2025.
- WHO Global Coordination Meeting (GCM) Participants Gathering. Nov. 2025: HIFA Partnership.
- WHO EPI-WIN: UNiTE end digital violence. Digital violence, such as doxxing, deep fakes, and online harassment, poses significant public health risks. Millions of women, girls, and adolescents face harassment, stalking, and threats in digital spaces meant for connection. In crisis settings, these digital threats create multiple challenges. Understand what they are and why it is important to integrate digital safety into humanitarian health responses. Dec. 2025.
- Engender Health Interactive Webinar: Safe Surg. Ecosystem: Marching Toward 2030: May 2024.
- Cochrane People, Health Systems and Public Health Thematic Group. Webinar on Does co-production of a Cochrane Review facilitate the translation of findings into practice? Aug 2024.
- Cochrane Webinar E-SCOPE: A Model for Identifying & Accelerating Implementation of Evidence-Based Best Practices. Aug 2024.
- 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. 13 Oct. 2023.
- 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. Sept 2022.

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 center 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.

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



Liberia



Malawi



Malta



MENA Region



Mexico



Mongolia



Morocco



Mozambique



Nepal



Nigeria



Pakistan



Sudan



Togo



Turkey



Uganda



Yemen



Zambia

GFMER has appointed a total of 36 coordinators in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Columbia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Gulf Cooperation Council, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Malta, MENA Region, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Sudan, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.

The main tasks of country coordinators consist of:

- Student coaching at a local level, i.e., helping the students to access the teaching material and learning methods. As the majority of students' 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 programs.

Picture of the week

<https://www.gfmer.ch/gfmervoices/pictureoftheweek-2025.htm>

We have created a section on our website entitled “Picture of the week”. Each week, we publish a photo on GFMER activities or 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 2025

Clickable thumbnails linking to the corresponding picture of the week



Participation in the 38th meeting of the HRP Policy and Coordination Committee

GFMER participated as an observer in the 38th meeting of the Policy and Coordination Committee (PCC) of the UNDP-UNFPA-UNICEF-WHO-World Bank Special Program of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP). The meeting was held from 29 to 30 April 2025 at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. GFMER was represented as observers by Dr Raqibat Idris and Dr Meena Nathan Cherian. 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. Dr Idris and Dr Cherian also attended the HRP Joint Intersession Meeting held online on 11 November 2025.

Activities planned for 2026

Courses in collaboration with WHO

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 2026 as follows:

- Adolescent sexual and reproductive health
 - Adaptation for WHO Francophone African Region
 - Global version
- Research methodology, research protocol development and scientific writing
- Sexually transmitted infections: An online evidence-based course

GFMER collaborative activities with Ipas

With an objective to build the capacity of young people and youth organizations on key themes and issues related to work on safe abortion, ODAS has developed the “Université Militante ODAS”, a specialized capacity-building program for young activists in the safe abortion movement in French-speaking Africa within its 5-year strategic plan.

The 1st Cohort: an 8-week e-learning course in French on “Avortement sécurisé et continuum des DSSR” was implemented from May to July 2025.

In 2026, GFMER’s collaboration with ODAS continues for the 2nd Cohort: a 12-week e-learning course in French on “Recherche et Gestion des Connaissances sur l’Avortement Sécurisé”.

GFMER collaborative activities with Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute

1. Dissemination of e-learning modules

GFMER will continue to disseminate all e-learning modules through its wide and expanding network of health professionals with ongoing monitoring. The possibility of converting the modules into an interactive online training with coaching support is being explored, and the first course “Implementing INTERGROWTH 21st: Monitoring growth from conception to infancy” is being developed.

2. Update of e-learning modules

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