

**Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research**

**WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction**

**Activity report**

**1 January 2004 - 31 December 2004**



## **WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction - status renewed until 2007**

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 for www.gfmer.ch](#).

## DEGREE COURSES

### 1. Postgraduate Research Training Course: 23 February - 2 April 2004

Thirty-four participants from 23 different nations attended the [2004 Training Course in Research in Reproductive Health/ Chronic Disease](#). This 6-weeks annual course has been established in 1992 and is jointly conducted with the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and the International association for Maternal and Neonatal Health ([IAMANEH](#)). Following a modular structure, the course aimed at making participants acquainted with clinical research methodology and latest advances in the area of reproductive health/ chronic disease. Participants had to prepare a [scientific paper](#) during the course and pass an exam at the end of the course in order to obtain the certificate.

### 2. 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. After the success of the postgraduate course in Indonesia in 2003, the course was disseminated to four countries. All courses were conducted in collaboration with WHO/RHR and IAMANEH.

#### [Argentina](#)

The course took place at [Centro Rosarino de Estudios Perinatales](#) (CREP), Rosario, from July-December 2004 ( over several weekends) and included a [videoconference](#) with GFMER during one of the course sessions.

#### [Cameroon](#)

Twenty-two participants attended the course which was held at the University of Yaoundé from 24 May to 16 July 2004, which was also supported by the Geneva Medical Faculty and the Geneva University Hospital.

#### [China](#)

Following a training session for trainers in December 2003, 17 participants took part in the [course](#) held at Fudan University, Shanghai in May 2004, including two [videoconferences](#) during which questions of the course participants were discussed online.

#### [Romania](#)

Organised by the East European Institute for Reproductive Health (EEIRH), the [course](#) took place at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Târgu-Mures in May 2004.

#### ***French version of the postgraduate course***

In order to enable scientists from the French speaking countries, especially from francophone Africa, to benefit from the course, most of the lectures have been [translated into French](#).

### 3. Advanced Epidemiology Course: 7-9 January 2004

Twelve students attended this 3-days course, (most of them enrolled in the Swiss German Interuniversity Program for the degree in 'Masters of Public Health') which was organized by GFMER (see [Advanced Methods in Epidemiology](#), [Lecture plan](#), and [Participants](#)).

Lectures were held at WHO by Prof A Morabia, Department of Clinical Epidemiology, University of Geneva and were again rated as 'excellent' by the participants.

### REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH - THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE FOUNDATION

In June 2004 the Foundation launched its very own journal. [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 to China, Romania and Argentina 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. Further ways to improve the video quality and to record the sessions for later playback through the website are investigated. Various solutions to create streaming video have been looked into (and applied) for providing long-run video with low-bandwidth.

A user-group of medical informatics experts ([MicTEG](#)) with the goal of disseminating information about informatics solutions used by GFMER has been formed.

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).

An initial web-based application for IBCT ([internet based clinical trials](#)) has been developed and applied to two different studies with incremental improvement occurring on a regular basis.

The online Encyclopedia of medical images has been completely revised to be dynamically PHP/database structured (see [Developmental and genetic diseases](#) and [Selected medical images](#)).

### CLINICAL TRAINING, RESEARCH AND GUIDELINES

#### 1. Publications/ Newsletter

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

[The GFMER Newsletter](#) - the first edition of the GFMER newsletter was published in November 2004, containing information on the Foundation's activities and useful links and announcements. The next edition is planned early 2005.

## 2. Applications to the WHO Essential Medicines List

As a WHO Collaborating Centre, GFMER conducted and submitted applications for 4 medicines to WHO/RHR to be included in the [Essential Medicines List of WHO](#):

- [Levonorgestrel-releasing IUD for contraception](#)
- [Mifepristone combined with Misoprostol for first trimester termination of pregnancy](#)
- [Combination injectable contraceptives](#)
- [Implantable contraceptives](#)

## 3. WHO Course on Training in Evidence-Based Reproductive Health Care (EBRHC)

The training material for the WHO course on EBRHC has been reviewed and updated; the revised version for facilitators and participants will be available during the first half of 2005.

## 4. Prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula (Dr 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 aims 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 2004 ([Activity report 2004](#)):

- Two missions to Tanguieta Hospital St Jean de Dieu, Northern Benin, during which surgical training for the treatment of obstetric fistula was performed.
- An [agreement between GFMER and the University of Cotonou, Benin](#) about future collaboration during the [visit of the Dean of the Medical Faculty, Cotonou](#) and the [Visit of the Minister of Health of Benin](#)
- The initiation of future collaboration between GFMER, the ministry of Health of [Guinea](#), WHO and UNFPA, followed by the visit of the Ignace Deen Hospital (Conakry) in December 2004. Currently, a physician from Conakry receives clinical training in Urology under the supervision of Dr C-H Rochat in Geneva.

Three missions for training in surgical treatment of obstetric fistula are planned at Tanguieta Hospital St. Jean de Dieu, Benin, in 2005.

## **5. Training and Research Program 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 program 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 programs.

In 2004, good progress towards achieving the objectives of the program has been made:

- Tools for the assessment of the current practice of laparoscopy at collaborating institutions have been developed. Contacts with a number of institutions have been established and details of collaboration are being elaborated.
- The outline of the manual was prepared and potential authors have been invited to contribute a chapter according to their expertise.
- A [virtual library for gynecologic laparoscopy](#) has been made available. This includes links to free of charge book chapters, publications, guidelines, reviews and images.
- A newly developed web-based [forum](#) gives a wider audience of surgeons the opportunity to engage in a discussion on current topics pertaining to laparoscopy.

## **6. International Network of Training and Research in Assisted Reproduction Techniques (ART)**

This project is aiming to provide recommendations for the accreditation of quality systems of human ART laboratories with the view to develop an internationally recognized standardization. There will be special focus on the organization and coordination of these techniques in developing countries. The project will also involve the development of an international network of centres and specialists that practice ART in humans following well-defined quality system guidelines and developing a common database. These centres will therefore have access to those quality criteria allowing them to obtain future international accreditation. Member centres of the network will also benefit of training and research possibilities in ART techniques. This project will be conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as several other organizations.

## MEETINGS

### 1. Meetings held at the Foundation

#### Foundation Council Meetings

Meetings were held on a regular basis (28 January, 2 March, 4 May, 24 August, 5 October and 15 December 2004) and current issues were discussed.

#### WHO/RHR Meetings

- 15 June 2004 - [WHO Reproductive Health Library Technical Working Group](#)
- 2 - 3 December 2004 - [WHO investigators' meeting on 'Misoprostol to treat postpartum hemorrhage'](#)

#### Others

- March 2004 - IAMANEH Executive Board Meeting
- 25-26 June - [Primo corso estivo dell' Associazione italiana sessuologia psicologia applicata](#)
- 22 September - Meeting of the members of Fonds Chalumeau

### 2. External meetings/Presentations

#### at WHO

- January 2004 - 113th WHO Executive Board Session (representing FIGO)
- May 2004 - World Health Assembly (representing FIGO)
- May 2004 - 114th WHO Executive Board Session (representing FIGO)
- 25 May 2004 - Systematic review on the prevalence/incidence of maternal mortality/morbidity

#### Others

- [4th Geneva Aging Workshop: Cancer and Aging at the Crossroad, Geneva, October 1-2](#)

## 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](#).

[Villes unies contre la Pauvreté](#) - Process evaluation and quality assessment in family planning services in Rosario, Argentina. This project, conducted in collaboration with Swiss and International Organizations and supported by the Ville de Genève, aims at evaluating and improving family planning services in

resource poor settings. The [project](#) was finalised by one of the participants during the postgraduate research training course.

[Le Programme Syni Lausanne](#) - GFMER works closely with Syni Lausanne, a programme that encourages the placement of professionals within the international, governmental and non-governmental organizations. So far, 4 professionals have been placed at the Foundation.

### **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. [From Research to Practice: Postgraduate Training Course in Reproductive Health 2005 \(14 February - 25 March 2005\)](#)

Organized in collaboration with the UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Program for Research 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. [Training Course in Sexual Health \(14 February - 25 March 2005\)](#)

Organized in collaboration with the Fonds Chalumeau and the Department of Reproductive Health and Research (WHO/RHR).

3. Postgraduate Training Course in Reproductive Health in Argentina (Rosario)

Organized in collaboration with the Centro Rosarino de Estudios Perinatales (CREP).

4. Postgraduate Training Course in Reproductive Health in Romania (Târgu-Mures)

Organized in collaboration with the East European Institute of Reproductive Health (EEIRH).

5. Postgraduate Training Course in Reproductive Health in Cameroon (Yaoundé)

Organized in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Yaoundé.

6. Internet-based data entry system

Studies in collaboration with WHO and other partners are planned to use the internet data entry system developed at GFMER.

7. [Robotically assisted laparoscopic surgery](#)

[European Robotic Urology Symposium](#) (Geneva, February 24-25, 2005)