

GENEVA FOUNDATION FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction



ANNUAL REPORT 2007

www.gfmer.ch

Chemin Edouard-Tavan 5 – CH -1206 Genève Tel. ++41 22 346 77 16 Fax : ++41 22 346 78 34
E-mail : secretariat@gfmer.org - Website: <http://www.gfmer.ch>

CONTENTS

1. [Preface by the President](#)
2. [GFMER Council and Executive Committee, GFMER activities and projects](#)
3. [Mission of the Foundation](#)
4. [Education](#)
5. [Research](#)
6. [Art for Health](#)
7. [Collaborations, Partnerships](#)
8. [Publications, Edition](#)
9. [Informatics, Knowledge Base, WEB](#)
10. [Meetings, conferences](#)
11. [Resources, Services](#)
12. [Forthcoming issues](#)
13. [Acknowledgements](#)

1. PREFACE BY THE PRESIDENT

At the start of 2008, the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) has provided clinical research training to over 500 health care professionals in many different countries through the annual Geneva-based training course and the dissemination of this course worldwide. Furthermore, GFMER has delivered assistance to 28 countries in education, research and in the field of surgery.

Our programmes are aimed towards capacity building of health care professionals in underresourced settings which in the long term will lead to improve the health of the population in these regions.

The partnerships we are building with the governmental, non-governmental and private sectors will allow extending the organization of post graduate and continued medical education and research support.

We continued to improve our website, and we attracted more than 10'000 visitors per day in 2007.

GFMER assistance to countries, programmes, mission focus, partnerships, policies, plans and priorities will ultimately contribute to help us to better serve the world's poorest and most vulnerable people while building partnerships committed to improve the Maternal and Reproductive Health initiatives.

The President:

Prof. Aldo Campana

2. GFMER COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Foundation Council

The members of the Foundation Council are:

- Prof. Aldo Campana (President and Founding Member)
- Dr. Blaise Bourrit (Secretary and Founding Member)
- Prof. Fritz Baumann
- Prof. Karl-Heinz Krause
- Prof. François Rieger
- P.D. Dr. Pierre Meyer
- Prof. Willy Pasini
- Prof. Jacques Philippe
- Prof. Charles-Henry Rochat
- Dr. José Villar

Executive Committee

The members of the Executive Committee are:

- Prof. Aldo Campana
- Dr. Blaise Bourrit
- Prof. Giuseppe Benagiano
- Dr. Regina Kulier
- Dr. Daniel Christiaen
- Dr. Hongguang Dong

3. MISSION

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research (GFMER) is a non-profit organisation, co-sponsored by the Department of Health of the Canton of Geneva, the Department of Social Affairs of the City of Geneva, the Faculty of Medicine, Geneva University, and the Geneva Medical Association and works in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). It aims at mobilising resources, both technical and financial, from the public and private sectors. GFMER is a WHO Collaborating Centre in Education and Research in Human Reproduction.

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research has a mandate to address challenges, such as:

- The conduct of training programmes in Geneva, covering research methodology, epidemiology, reproductive and sexual health, and other medical areas
- The dissemination of the Geneva training courses in other countries
- The establishment of a centre for research synthesis and the conduct of Cochrane activities together with the Cochrane Collaboration
- The initiation and provision of support for researchers to plan, conduct and publish their scientific work
- The dissemination of medical information on Internet
- The development of clinical guidelines for use in clinical training programmes

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research capitalises on many years of experience and activities of the WHO Collaborating Centre in Human Reproduction, Geneva.

Objectives

Overall objectives

The overall objectives are to:

- provide health education programmes and research to developing countries and countries in economic transition
- establish collaboration between entities from the public and private sectors



4. EDUCATION

Degree Courses

Geneva Research Training Course: 26 February - 28 March 2007

Thirty participants from 20 different nations attended the 2007 Training Course in Research in Reproductive Health/Sexual Health. This 5-weeks annual course has been established in 1992 and is jointly conducted with the Department for Reproductive Health and Research, World Health Organization (RHR/WHO), the International association for Maternal and Neonatal Health (IAMANEH), the San Raffaele del Monte Tabor Foundation and the Fonds Universitaire Maurice Chalumeau (FUMC).



Links:

- http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/PGC_RH_2007/RH_Lectureplan_2007.htm
- http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/PGC_SH_2007/SH_Lectureplan_2007.htm

Postgraduate Training in Reproductive Health Research, Faculty of Medicine, University of Yaoundé, Cameroon, 12 November - 13 December 2007

One of the aims of GFMER is to disseminate the Geneva Course to partner institutions in developing countries and countries in economic transition. This year, the Course was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon for the second time, with the financial support of the Service de la Solidarité Internationale of the Canton of Geneva, among others. Twenty-three participants (from Cameroon, Comoros and Chad) attended the Course. Lecturers were previous participants of the Geneva Course and members of GFMER, WHO, UNFPA and the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Yaoundé. Some lecturers presented via videoconferencing from the GFMER.



Link: http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/Cameroon_2007/Lecture_plan.htm

5. RESEARCH

Research and Research Synthesis Activities

Leonardo da Vinci project - vocational teaching in Europe (Dr R Kulier)

A pilot project supported by the European Union to harmonise postgraduate medical education by using e-learning tools and integrated teaching has been developed. The project involved 11 partners throughout Europe, with Birmingham University as the leading partner. The project was successfully conducted and presented at the EBM teachers' conference in Sicily and the results have been published in peer reviewed journals (Harmonising Evidence-Based Medicine teaching: a study of the outcomes of e-learning in five European countries; A clinically integrated curriculum in Evidence-based Medicine for just-in-time learning through on-the-job training: The EU-EBM project). Support from the European Union to develop the project further, the 'Training-the trainers-project' has been granted.

Links:

- <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6920/8/27>
- <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6920/7/46>

The RHL EBM trial (Dr R Kulier)

GFMER is involved in a multicenter, international trial to evaluate novel teaching and learning techniques for postgraduate and continued medical education. The trial compares a learner-centered, problem-based, e-learning course with clinical activities in the workplace to traditional lectures to teach evidence-based medicine. When successfully implemented, the course is designed to provide just-in-time learning through on-the-job training, with the potential for teaching and learning to directly impact on clinical practice without increasing the burden on staff, especially in already busy clinical centres.

The trial is conducted in collaboration with WHO, Department of Reproductive Health and Research and Birmingham University, UK. The partners in this trial are University institutions in Argentina, Brazil, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Philippines, South Africa and Thailand.

GFMER is responsible for the overall development and coordination of the trial and the electronic data handling.

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 under the name the "Tanguieta Model". This programme is supported by the Ville de Genève, Esperanza Foundation, Ambra Foundation and private donators, and is conducted in collaboration with WHO and UNFPA.

The aims of the project are:

- Training local specialists in fistula repair
- Raising awareness about prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula
- Development of research programmes

Following the extension of the "Tanguieta Model" to new centres in 2006, the following activities were carried out in 2007:

- Two missions to St. Jean de Dieu Hospital of Tanguieta - Benin, one mission to the Provincial Hospital of Maroua - Cameroon, one mission to Fada N'gourma Hospital - Burkina Faso and two missions in Conakry and Kissidougou Hospitals - Guinea, during which 189 women underwent fistula repair and local doctors (from the sub region) received training in fistula surgery.
- Following the development of the internet-based obstetric fistula database, many centres started entering their data in the database. These data will be used for future research.

GFMER has been in contact with potential partners to build lateral collaborations for the management of Obstetric Fistula in other countries. A collaboration with MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières) Switzerland for the Management of Obstetric Fistula in Abeche, Chad, has been established.



Links:

- http://www.gfmer.ch/Presentations_Fr/Fistules_obstetricales.htm
- http://www.gfmer.ch/Activites_internationales_Fr/PDF/Rapport_2007_fistules_obstetricales_Rochat.pdf

Robotically assisted laparoscopic surgery (Prof C-H Rochat)

Following the European Robotic Urology Symposium, the European Group for Robotic Surgery (EGRU) was founded and is hosted at the Foundation. The following activities were carried out:

- Participation in courses and conferences
- Development of an internet-based robotic laparoscopic surgery database
- Data entry in the database to be used for the prospective study the practice of robotically assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy for the treatment of localized prostate cancer



Links:

- <http://www.gfmer.ch/EGRU/Index.htm>
- http://www.gfmer.ch/EGRU_Fr/pdf/Rapport_2007_Chirurgie_laparoscopique_robotisee_Rochat.pdf

Training and Research Programme in laparoscopic surgery (PD Dr P Meyer)

The overall aim of this programme 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.

A training course for advanced oncologic laparoscopy has been successfully conducted in Saint Petersburg in 2006, in collaboration with the St. Petersburg City Clinical Oncology Dispensary.



Link: http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/project_laparoscopy.htm

6. ART FOR HEALTH (PROF W PASINI)



The vision

Global disparities in reproductive health between rich and poor countries represent one of the starkest health inequities of our time and a major social justice.

Each year approximately 500,000 pregnant women and four million newborns die due to complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. 99% of these deaths occur in the poorest countries of the world. Similarly, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, reproductive tract infections, chronic hepatitis, HPV-related cervical cancer, and other morbidities disproportionately affect the most vulnerable and disenfranchised populations of women and infants.

Much could potentially be done to save and improve the lives of women and their families if more people became fully informed about the risks associated with reproductive health in low resource nations, and galvanized to work towards alleviating these risks.

The "Art for Health" project aims to increase awareness of and promote action towards the improvement of women's reproductive health conditions around the world. The series of paintings depict women from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds. Inscribed within the paintings are messages spoken by the women themselves that call upon the viewer to join them in a unified effort to better their lives and the lives of future generations.

Ms. Elisabetta Farina is an accomplished artist dedicated to the documentation of women's struggles to achieve gender equity. Through the use of an artistic expression originally developed during the Pop Art movement, Ms. Farina produces empowering portraits of women seeking to confront and challenge their adverse life circumstances. The positive images of women she creates force us to re-consider stereotypical notions of underprivileged women as hapless victims, asking us instead to view them as willing partners in the advancement of women's health.

Gallery

See the artworks (http://www.gfmer.ch/Art_for_Health/AH_gallery.htm)



History of the project

- Art for health: reducing maternal and newborn mortality
http://www.gfmer.ch/International_activities_En/PDF/Art_for_health.pdf
- Art for Health project meeting - WHO Geneva 2006
http://www.gfmer.ch/International_activities_En/Art_for_Health_WHO_2006.htm

Partners

- Elisabetta Farina, painter
- Willy Pasini, GFMER
- Mario Meriardi, RHR/WHO
- Aldo Campana, GFMER
- Francesco Aureli, IMAGINE
- Jennifer Harris, Population Centre University of Texas



Link: http://www.gfmer.ch/Art_for_Health/AH.htm

7. COLLABORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS

The following associations work in close collaboration with GFMER and have their headquarters at the Foundation:

- International Association for Maternal and Neonatal Health (IAMANEH)
- San Raffaele del Monte Tabor Foundation / San Raffaele Hospital
- European Group of Robotic Urology (EGRU)

San Raffaele del Monte Tabor Foundation / San Raffaele Hospital, Milan (Dr Giovanna Stancanelli)

In 2005 the San Raffaele Hospital (HSR) established a partnership with the Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research and opened an office in Geneva based at GFMER with the aim to increase the visibility of HSR among the international organizations based in Geneva and to organize and coordinate an international network of collaborating centres for clinical, educational, and research programmes.

HSR launched several initiatives with different WHO departments. In collaboration with the WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research and GFMER, HSR hosted in December 2006 an exhibition in Milan devoted to the Art for Health project, with the participation of Prof. Willy Pasini and Dr. Mario Merialdi. The funds raised have been used to sponsor a postgraduate training in reproductive health in Uganda. Two gynecologists from the San Raffaele Hospital in Uganda attended the Geneva research training course in reproductive health in order to fully meet the highest quality standards in the preparation of the educational programme in Uganda.



Link: <http://www.gfmer.ch/HSR.html>

Franco-Vietnamese Association for Liver studies and Education - FValse (Dr J Bengoa, Dr PJ Malé, Dr J Petit, Dr Huy, Prof 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 educational programme for health care professionals in this field.

- Hepatitis B and C in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
- Clinical Research: epidemiology of viral hepatitis
- Training of doctors and nurses and prevention at the hospital
- Information and education of patients



Activities

January	Presentation at the « Académie Suisse des Sciences » in Basel; Dr J. Bengoa Colloquium on the Switzerland/Third-World co-operations
March	Lecture on Hepatitis during the GFMER/WHO Course in Reproductive Health Research in Geneva; Dr José Bengoa, Dr Pierre Jean Malé
March	Communication APASL (Asian Pacific Association Study Liver) in Kyoto; Dr Ngo Van Huy
April	Mission in Ho Chi Minh City (2 weeks); Dr Bengoa Postgraduate Course in Gastroenterology- HCM University Medical Center
May	Media campaign during the World Digestive Health Day Hepatitis; Screening Programme by viral serology
June	Mission in Ho Chi Minh City (2 weeks); Dr Malé Course on Hepatitis and pregnancy
November	Mission in Ho Chi Minh City (2 weeks); Dr Bengoa
November	Lecture on Hepatitis during the GFMER/WHO Course in Reproductive Health Research in Yaoundé - Cameroon; Dr José Bengoa

Publications

Handouts for patients translated into Vietnamese

- 1) Hepatitis B: generality
- 2) Hepatitis C: generality, questions/answers
- 3) Hepatic biopsy
- 4) Campaign for Hepatitis B vaccination

Scientific communications

Communication APASL: Difficult-to-treat genotypes but moderate fibrosis of hepatitis C patients in Vietnam.
HUY V NGO, QUYEN HT HO, MALE Pierre-Jean, BENGEOA José

Link: http://www.gfmer.ch/International_activities_En/FValse.htm

Lao PDR Collaboration (Y-M Ebinger)

Under the umbrella of the Lao PDR Ministry of Health, in the years 2006 and 2007 GFMER signed collaborative agreements with several Lao Health Institutions, according to the mission of the Foundation which is to “Furnish health educational programmes and research support to developing countries”.



The Mother and Child Health and Reproductive Health domains are the first priority for the Lao PDR Public Health Institute for the next five years. The GFMER collaboration project will increase the accessibility of state of the art relevant domain of post graduate medical knowledge, in terms of training, research support, scientific information and dissemination.

In agreement with the Lao PDR Health Ministry, the National Institute of Public Health, the Lao PDR University of Health Sciences and various Laotian healthcare institutions, a cooperation programme has been initiated and formally approved in November 2006 by all participating partners. The first phase of this programme will require financing over three years.

The collaboration between GFMER and the Ministry of Health of the Lao PDR is in the 4th Five-Year Plan 2007-2011 (Fourth Five Year Health Research Master Plan 2007-2011, page 20) and have been signed with several institutions:

- Lao PDR Ministry of Health, Vientiane
- University of Health Sciences, Vientiane
- National Institute for Public Health, Vientiane
- Institut de la Francophonie pour la Médecine Tropicale, Vientiane
- Mother and Child Health Hospital, Vientiane.

Activities in 2007

- First “Collaboration Meeting” in Vientiane (30 May, 2007)
- Identification of relevant domains
- Several meetings with project stakeholders
- Curriculum design
- Planning, design and project management

GFMER missions in Vientiane: February, May and November 2007.

Vientiane Working Group: Prof. S. Kingsada (UHS), Dr. S.Phommala (NIOPH), Prof. B.Sensathit (MCHH), Prof. Y.M.Strobel (IFMT), Dr. C. Songnavong (CHT), Prof. S. Menorath (UHS), Dr. A.Phangsavan (UHS), Dr. O. Lincetto (WHO), GFMER Programme Director : Dr. Y.-M. Ebinger, local Coordinator: Dr. K.Chantavysouk (MCHH).

First Meeting in Vientiane, 30 May, 2007



Organised in collaboration with the Lao PDR Ministry of Health and the National Institute of Public Health.

Objectives: Synthesis of needs and priorities of the Partners.

Chairman: Prof Dr Kongsab Akkhavong, Vice Director of NIOPH

Participants: Representatives of: Training and Human Resource MOPH, NIOPH, Public Health School, College of Health Technology, Mother and Child Health Hospital, Faculty of Medicine, IFMT, IRD, UNFPA - in total 9 institutes and 28 participants.

Link: http://www.gfmer.ch/Activites_internationales_Fr/Laos/Laos_Home.html

National Center for Sexual and Reproductive Health, Lahore, Pakistan (Dr Fuad Hameed Rai)

In April 2007, an agreement was signed in Geneva between the National Center for Sexual and Reproductive Health and GFMER. One of the salient features of this agreement is capacity building of Pakistani doctors, nurses, paramedics, midwives, health workers and allied professionals in various fields through organization of postgraduate courses in Pakistan.



Links:

- http://www.gfmer.ch/GFMER_members/Fuad_Rai.htm
- http://www.gfmer.ch/GFMER_members/Images/P-3.jpg

8. PUBLICATIONS, EDITION

Reproductive Health - The Official Journal of the Foundation

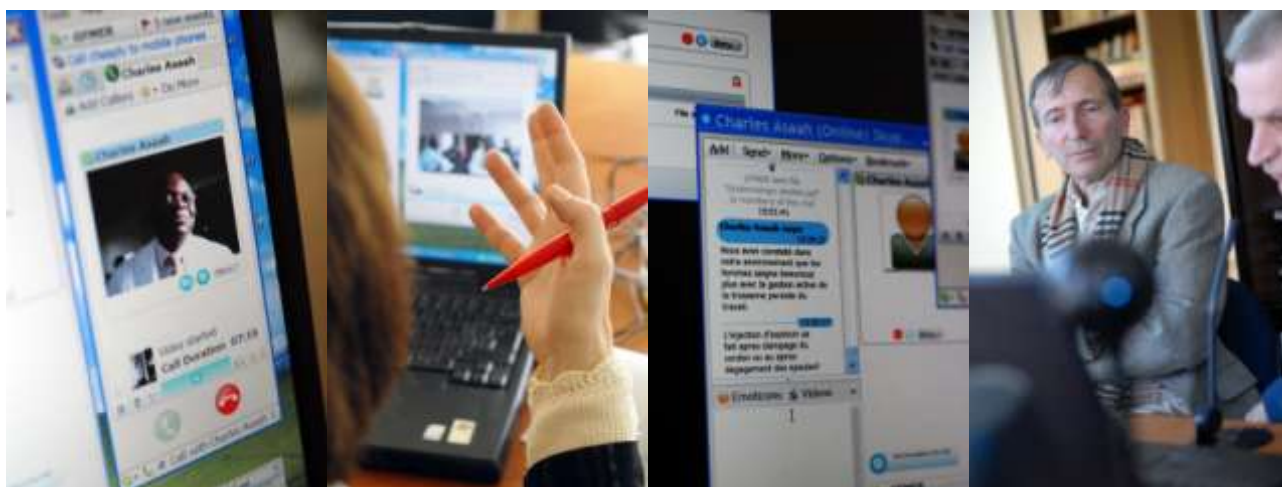


GFMER hosts the editorial seat of the specialist journal *Reproductive Health*. In 2007, 12 articles were published. Most of the published articles originated from-income countries. During this year, an additional editor-in-chief, Prof Jose Guilherme Cecatti, joined the editorial team. *Reproductive Health* is an open-access, peer-reviewed, online specialist journal, with its content freely and universally available. GFMER aims to encourage especially researchers from low - and middle income settings to submit their research findings and making them available to a wider audience. The submission and peer review process are done electronically, thus allowing swifter publication.

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

9. INFORMATICS, KNOWLEDGE BASE, WEB

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 continue to evolve the methods used to record & archive the video conferences in order to provide access to interested people targeting the GFMER website (e.g., investigation into the use of Adobe Presenter). Participants in the postgraduate courses experienced learning sessions with hands-on use of these technologies. As in previous years, basic instruction on classical informatics applications (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) was given. Newer technologies such as Skype (voice-over-ip), open-source Google-docs, and RSS-feeds were also included in the course material for the first time. Some material related to the basics of security such as secure online web browsing, password management and VPNs (virtual private networks) was incorporated for the first time.



The number of streaming videos available on the website continues to grow and expertise in converting to and from the more modern 'Flash' (FLV) format was developed. Our continual monitoring of the website statistics reveals how our efforts to provide long-run video with low-bandwidth are appreciated by visitors to the site. The user-group of medical informatics experts (MicTEG) with the goal of disseminating information about informatics solutions used by GFMER continues to exist and attracted a few 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 forum areas developed last year (*Sexual Health Forum*) for GFMER activities and as a demonstration application for attracting collaborators who may wish to create topic-specific forum areas were updated to improve the anti-spamming and security issues.

The existing GFMER web-based applications have started entering into their final phases for the internet based clinical trials (IBCT) and new projects are taking form. In 2007 we integrated for the first time, some new AJAX style dynamic statistics to start the migration to the newer Web 2.0 standard.

In the long-term this should allow better information sharing, collaboration and functionality of the web; in the immediate it has relieved some of the server load where the applications are installed. The software versioning system has revealed itself to have been a useful tool in tracking evolutions in the IBCT software and some preliminary investigation into the inclusion of the Adobe PDF form-technology has been looked into.

The applications continue to improve in robustness, with the inclusion of new alternate backup strategies, data-consistency trackers & markers, and error-catching for connectivity issues. Initial efforts to create a demonstration area with an artificial database continue. Tests to provide SPSS format data export are still under study. Much investment was under-taken to stimulate user participation to contribute their own data in the undergoing collaborations (e.g., the Laparoscopy and Obstetric Fistula projects).

The online Encyclopedia of medical images has been modified to allow a greater number of images to be stored and provided to internet users. Revisions have been made to the online Encyclopedia of medical images (a dynamic PHP/database) to continue to improve its usability and ease-of-use (see [Developmental and genetic diseases](#) and [Selected medical images](#)).

The development of a new online learning tool was initiated (modeling and first implementation) for what will become the RHL-EBM Evidence Based Medicine Course run with the collaboration of WHO. This is a pilot development in the use of the Ruby development language and the Rails architecture to help speed the process of future database application development in other GFMER projects.

Creation of a spreadsheet conversion application for fast delivery of simplified database web applications. This 'xls2web' tool is still in its preliminary stages. The goal is to allow better visibility/editing/public-use of other data sources at the foundation. It is under development.

The list of currently ongoing online medical database projects being studied are:

- RHL EBM Study, WHO, Switzerland
- Misoprostol for the treatment of primary postpartum hemorrhage, 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
- International Robot-Assisted Cystectomy Consortium (IRCC), New York

Link: <http://www.gfmer.ch/Informatics/>

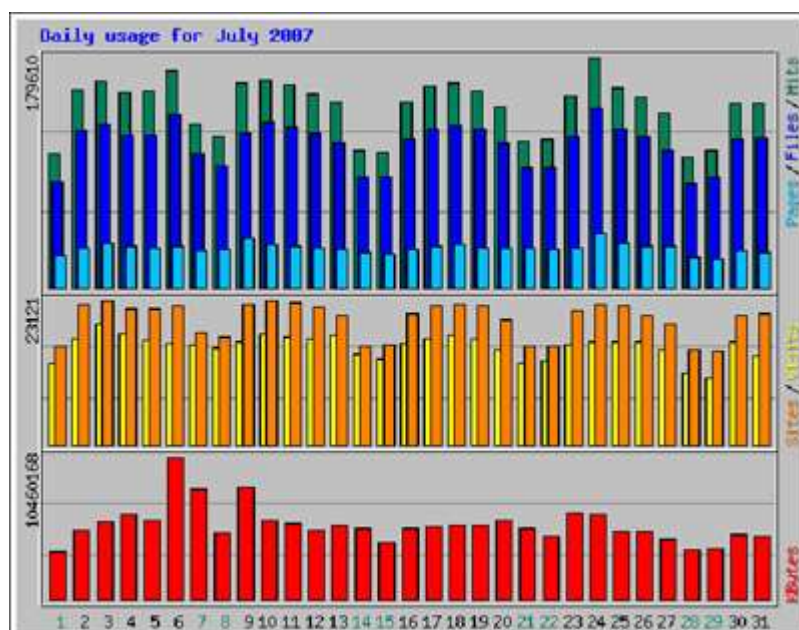
WEBSITE



The GFMER website (<http://www.gfmer.ch/>) is extensive, regularly updated and provides easy access to useful information. The website contains the following:

- Languages
 - English, French, Italian, German, Spanish
- Foundation
 - Information about the mission, objectives and structure of the Foundation
- 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

For the year 2007, the website received about 12000 to 16000 visits per day.



10. MEETINGS / CONFERENCES

Foundation Council Meetings

Meetings were held on a regular basis.

Scientific meetings and conferences attended:

- February 2007 - Leonardo EU EBM Unity collaborators' meeting, Alicante, Spain
- April 2007 - *RHL @ 10 – Conference at Khon Kaen, Thailand*
- June 2007 - RHL-EBM trial investigators' meeting at WHO, Geneva
- June 2007 - Leonardo EU EBM Unity collaborators' meeting, Amsterdam
- October 2007 - Leonardo EU EBM Unity, Steering committee meeting, Birmingham, UK
- November 2007- RHL-EBM trial investigators' meeting at WHO, Geneva
- November 2007 - International Conference of Evidence-Based Health Care Teachers and Developers, Taormina Sicily

11. RESOURCES, SERVICES

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.

Training

GFMER is experienced in conducting short, long and distance training courses as well as conferences in different health related areas.

Research

GFMER in collaboration with its international network of scientists has the know-how on research implementation, synthesis and management. Its staff and members have years of experience in conducting and implementing clinical research at all levels.

Research implementation

In the context of its International Research Network, GFMER is conducting low-cost research with immediate implementation of research results at country level.

Research synthesis (systematic reviews) and scientific publication

Science is cumulative. Systematic reviews of the literature are essential to justify any prospective investigation and to guide policy and practice. Research synthesis is essential for summarizing the evidence for the effectiveness of health care interventions, the association of risk factors with a certain outcome, the validity of biological testing and other epidemiological studies such as prevalence/incidence of disease. GFMER offers short courses on how to interpret and apply valid research findings.

Research management - Internet based data entry

GFMER is a hosting provider for online data collection, viewing, and statistical review for medical data. Clinical investigators with a need to have data entered from one or more geographically distributed sites may use our services to collect, manage and overview their data. Although the service is primarily focused on multi-centric collaborative clinical trials, it can be applied more generally.

Technology development

GFMER has recently focused its attention on healthcare technology development. Related fields of interest are robotic surgery, assisted reproductive techniques, photodynamic therapy and dynamic angiothermography.

Website

The aim of the GFMER website is to provide relevant, selected and freely accessible information on health. Several web services are offered.

Link: http://www.gfmer.ch/Services/GFMER_services.htm

12. FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Reproductive health research methodology training at the Ministry of Public Health, Kabul, Afghanistan
http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/Afghanistan_2008/Research_methodology_training_Afghanistan_2008.htm

Geneva Research Training Course in Sexual and Reproductive Health
http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/PGC_RH_2008/RH_Lectureplan_2008.htm
http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/PGC_SH_2008/SH_Lectureplan_2008.htm

From Bedside to Bench - Translational medicine course for the basic scientist
http://www.gfmer.ch/Translational_medicine/TM_advertisement_2008.htm

GFMER Short Training Courses
http://www.gfmer.ch/Services/GFMER_short_training_courses.htm

Programme of Training and Research on Alzheimer's disease
<http://www.gfmer.ch/neperdspaslacarte/>

Doctors for Africa - Master in Emergency and Essential Care (EEC) at District Hospitals in Developing Countries
- University Centre for International Cooperation of the University of Parma
http://www.gfmer.ch/Medical_education_En/pdf/Doctors_Africa_Parma_2007.pdf

13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research would first like to express its appreciation to the people involved in the GFMER activities for their generous sharing of time, information and scientific support.

All field activities conducted during this year were done in collaboration and with the coordinating support from local health professionals and governmental authorities. Thanks also to our partner institutions that provided assistance in many ways.

A final note of thanks to the many foreign students and graduates who generously granted us their time to provide comments and feedback about our activities.

We also thank all the donors from public and private sectors who provided both technical and financial support.

We acknowledge the support from the Department of Health of the Canton of Geneva, the Department of Social Affairs of the City of Geneva, the Service de la Solidarité Internationale of the Canton of Geneva, and many other public and private organizations. Last but not least, the collaboration with WHO (World Health Organization) and UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) has proven to have been essential in the success of all our activities.