**FEDERATION MATTERS**

African Federation for Emergency Medicine’s Francophone Working Group – May 2018 Report

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**ABSTRACT**

Even though the African Federation for Emergency Medicine (AFEM) has been successfully developing emergency care in Africa for the past nine years, a considerable amount of potential AFEM members from the African-Francophone countries are not able to access AFEM resources. In response, an AFEM Francophone Working Group has been created to coordinate all existing and new initiatives to promote emergency care in African-Francophone countries.

**Introduction**

Even though the African Federation for Emergency Medicine (AFEM) has been successfully developing emergency care in Africa for the past nine years, a considerable amount of potential AFEM members from the African-Francophone countries are not able to access AFEM resources. In response, an AFEM Francophone Working Group has been created to coordinate all existing and new initiatives to promote emergency care in African-Francophone countries.

**Challenges that led to the creation of AFEM’s Francophone Working Group**

In less than ten years, AFEM has succeeded in gathering more than 2000 people in over 25 countries across Africa. These members now have the opportunity to improve their local and regional emergency care capacity through AFEM resources, including biannual AFEM conferences, AFEM’s educational materials and AFEM leadership.

Unfortunately, when compared to the African-English speaking countries, French-speaking countries have been underrepresented in the past three biannual AFEM conferences held in Ghana (2012), Ethiopia (2014), and Egypt (2016). They have been unable to make use of AFEM’s educational resources due to the language barrier as almost all of AFEM’s educational materials are in English, and AFEM representation in French-speaking countries is almost non-existent. Furthermore, none of the nine African emergency medicine societies have a French training programme.

**The role of AFEM’s Francophone Working Group**

The AFEM’s Francophone Working Group’s main goal is to help accomplish AFEM’s priorities; that is, to increase membership and awareness, to increase presence in Francophone and North African countries, to increase advocacy activities, to develop AFEM regional groups and in-country presence, and to promote acute care research and the development of African clinician researchers.

Having an AFEM-Francophone section is crucial to increasing AFEM’s Francophone membership, coordinating all Francophone initiatives, helping with the AFEM material translation to French, and ensuring that standards of training in emergency care and research in emergency medicine are provided according to AFEM’s goals and vision.

AFEM’s Francophone Working Group also ensures that AFEM regulations, ethics, and policies are followed throughout its activities. AFEM’s Francophone Working Group does not function as a private association and it does not represent AFEM, locally or internationally, without AFEM permission. (Fig. 1)

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What has been done so far?

AFEM identifies increasing the presence of Francophone countries as one of its main priorities. Incredible efforts to spread AFEM’s vision in Francophone countries have been initiated:

– September 2014: the African Journal of Emergency Medicine (AJEM) editor offered a space for French publications and research discussion in French via a social media (WhatsApp) group. However, more efforts are needed to invite Francophone members to publish in AJEM and to use that group.

– April 2016: AFEM had the Rapid Assessment Protocols (RAP) French versions in both pocket and poster format. This marked the first AFEM educational offering available in French. Additional efforts are needed to distribute it widely and to guide its rational use.

– May 2016: The process of translating the AFEM Handbook of Acute and Emergency Care from English to French was initiated.

– One AFEM francophone member, Dr. Muller Mundenga (DRC), qualified as an Emergency Medicine specialist in December 2016 (Tanzania) while three francophone Emergency Medicine specialists will graduate in Cape Town by (2018-2019).

– November 2016: AFEM offered, for the first time, an opportunity to Francophone speakers to have research and other matters presented in French during the 3rd African Conference on Emergency Medicine (AfCEM 2016) held in Cairo, Egypt. Efforts were made to coordinate both senior and junior faculty to participate in these sessions.

– August 2017: The creation of AFEM’s Francophone Working Group.

– December 2017: Participation at the African International Conference on Emergency Medicine held in Cairo, Egypt with the theme “Francophone & Anglophone Africa”.

– Beginning of 2018: Started (re-)establishing the relationship of leading Emergency Medicine and Emergency Care groups in Francophone Africa. This process is ongoing and those groups include Coopération Internationale pour la Médecine d’Urgence (CIMUVISA) and Société Africaine Francophone de Médecine d’Urgence (SAFMU).

– March 2018: Finalized the first review of a translated manuscript for the AFEM Handbook of Acute and Emergency Care. The second and final review of the manuscript will be done by November 2018.

– June 2018: Participation in the Pan-African Francophone Congress of Emergency Medicine in Allada, Benin.

– November 2018: AfCEM 2018 will have a full scientific session dedicated to francophone speakers and there will be a two-day hands-on and simulation-based pre-conference workshop in French. The Francophone Workshop will focus on key Emergency Medicine topics and skills that are required in the management of common emergencies encountered in settings with limited resources.

Short and long-term goals of AFEM’s Francophone Working Group

To work with AFEM subcommittees (AFEM services, AFEM administration, AFEM info, AFEM scientific, and others) and other local and international individuals or organisations interested to advancing Emergency Medicine in Francophone Africa, to be able to:

– Increase the awareness of AFEM in Francophone countries

– Increase AFEM’s Francophone members
- Translate AFEM materials in French and to ensure their prompt usage
- Ensure the quality of training in emergency care in Francophone countries
- Ensure the standard of emergency care in Francophone countries
- Promote research in Emergency Medicine in Francophone countries

Conclusion

The AFEM’s Francophone Working Group has made strides to improve access for emergency care in Francophone Africa. But there is a lot more work that need to be done. If you would like to get involved, or lend a hand please contact us at scientific@afem.info.

Acknowledgement

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Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts to declare