

 **BASICS**
TRIP REPORT

**Strengthening the Teaching of Diarrheal
Diseases at Medical Schools
Yaounde, Cameroon
October 31–November 5, 1994**

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**WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING THE TEACHING
OF DIARRHEAL DISEASES AT MEDICAL SCHOOLS**

YAOUNDE, CAMEROON

October 31-November 5, 1994

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ACRONYMS

ARI	Acute Respiratory Infection
BASICS	Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival
CDD	Control of Diarrheal Disease
DTU	Diarrheal Training Unit
WHO	World Health Organization

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BASICS regional advisor for Francophone Africa visited Yaounde, Cameroon October 31 - November 4, 1994 to take part in the workshop entitled, "Strengthening the Teaching of Diarrheal Diseases at Medical Schools," the first French-language, intercountry training workshop on strengthening the teaching of diarrheal diseases at medical schools organized par WHO/Geneva. Twenty participants, including senior professors from five medical schools in five different countries (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, and Niger), attended the workshop.

With a very tight five-day schedule, course facilitators conducted the workshop using a variety of teaching methods which included reading, lecture, discussion, clinical practice, role play, and case presentation. The workshop senior medical professors the opportunity to learn a new methodology of teaching and to discuss with colleagues from other universities teaching and clinical experiences. At the end of the workshop, each school developed a teaching plan which included teaching methods to be used in both ;large and small groups, and a 12-month work plan. WHO, in collaboration with BASICS, will need to plan a follow-up visit to each individual medical school to follow up on progress made on the work plans.

The three facilitators who conducted the workshop were: Ivan Lejnev, CDD training coordinator WHO/Geneva; Pr. Ekoe Tetanye, chairman of Department of Pediatrics, medical school of Yaounde; and Dr. Adama Koné, BASICS regional advisor for Francophone Africa.

2. BACKGROUND

BASICS participated in the first intercountry workshop on strengthening teaching of diarrhea diseases at medical schools for English-language countries. Since that workshop, WHO and BASICS have been organizing a French-language workshop on the same topic. In August and September 1994, preliminary visits to identified countries were conducted by WHO/AFRO and BASICS regional office staff to select possible participants and to explain the purpose and objectives of the workshop. Four countries were visited by the BASICS regional advisor; among them, Mali and Niger.

Four persons were selected from each country: two teachers of pediatrics, one teacher of preventive and/or community medicine, and the CDD program coordinator.

3. WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Twenty participants from the medical schools of Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Mali and Niger (four from each country) attended the workshop.

Three facilitators conducted the workshop. Two external facilitators spent the weekend preparing the sessions.

Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop was composed of two parts and had the following objectives:

During the first half of the training workshop, participants were expected to:

1. Receive information about the epidemiology and pathophysiology of diarrhea, and the WHO and national CDD program guidelines for the management and prevention of diarrhea.
2. Assess and manage cases of diarrhea under the supervision of the workshop director and staff, following WHO and national CDD program guidelines.
3. Observe the operation and layout of an established diarrhea training unit (DTU) and its function as a specialized teaching and treatment facility.
4. Participate in, and practice using, a wide variety of teaching methods such as case studies, role play, demonstrations, drills, and case presentations, in addition to traditional lectures.

During the second half the workshop, participants were expected to:

1. Assess his or her school's current approach to teaching about diarrheal diseases, and identify areas in which it might be improved.
2. Plan how to improve the clinical setting in which students learn to treat diarrhea cases, including developing or strengthening a DTU in the teaching hospital.
3. Revise the agenda for teaching students about diarrheal diseases during their assignment to paediatrics, or other relevant department in his or her school, using the WHO instructor manual:
 - * select topics to be taught,
 - * select the teaching activities to be used for each topic, and
 - * schedule teaching activities to be used with large and small groups of students, including students assigned to the DTU (or other diarrhea treatment area).
4. Consider ways to improve the assessment of students' knowledge and skills.
5. Plan the training of other faculty and hospital staff in case management practices and teaching methods used in the workshop.

6. Develop and present a 12-month work plan and schedule for the implementation of these activities.
7. Plan follow-up activities.

Methodology

Several teaching methods were used to conduct the workshop, including lecture, reading, discussion, written exercises, video, case studies, drills, case presentations, role play, clinical demonstration, and clinical practice.

Teaching Materials

Each participant received the following educational materials:

- Instructor Manual, provides learning objectives, suggested teaching activities, and detailed guidelines for conducting activities.
- Readings on Diarrhea (student manual), contains the information the medical student(s) used to assess and treat young children with diarrhea.
- Reference on Diarrhea, contains related background articles that summarize recent research and provide additional information on most topics covered in the student textbook.
- Guide to Student Evaluation, describes approaches to evaluating the knowledge and skills of students and contains a set of examination questions and a sample clinical skills checklist for use by students.
- Workshop Participant Manual, a workshop manual to be used by student(s) during the training. It contains course objectives and exercises.

Preparation

Drs. Lejnev and Koné spent the weekend prior to the workshop preparing for it. (Pr. Tetanye was unable to join them due to a death in his family.) The workshop schedule proposed by Dr. Lejnev was reviewed, distributing tasks among themselves. (Lejnev encouraged Koné to take the leading role in this as Koné will be conducting such workshops in the future.) Workshop performance and proposed solutions for improvement were also discussed.

Conduction of the Workshop

With a tight schedule of five days and a short version of the course director's guide prepared by Lejnev, facilitators conducted the workshop. In previous workshops the course length was 6.5 days (India), in Ethiopia, 5.5 days.

For the first three days, following the workshop director's guide, examples of different teaching methods such as lecture, reading, video, discussion, and clinical practice were demonstrated first by facilitators and then by participants. Each teaching method was discussed with participants to determine whether or not such a method could be applied in the participants' schools.

During the last two days, participants were organized in small groups, per country. They switched from learning to manage cases of diarrhea to planning how to strengthen the teaching on diarrheal diseases in their own schools.

Each group's first activity was to assess the current approach to teaching in each school and to identify areas in which it might be improved. Teaching objectives were reviewed in a large group in a session focused on *what is taught* and *how it is taught*, and how to use the instructor manual. Participants then worked again in their small groups, and, using worksheets, reviewed their schools' current agenda for the teaching on diarrheal diseases and identified areas in which teaching should be strengthened. They also identified topics to be taught in large and small group settings.

The small groups' work was presented and discussed by all the workshop participants with suggestions being made by other participants and facilitators. It should be noted here that in most schools, there is not enough time allocated for the teaching of diarrheal diseases (5 to 8 hours). Most schools plan to teach the first three units (epidemiology and etiology, pathophysiology of watery diarrhea, and assessing the diarrhea patient) with the remaining five units to be done in a small group, mainly on clinical, setting.

The second activity was to plan teaching activities for a 12-month period. Each school developed a workplan which included the following areas of change: teaching facilities, teaching agenda, student assessment, training faculty and hospital staff, and coordination with other departments. Workplans were discussed in the large group, and suggestions were made to improve the individual workplans.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Because of a delay in the start up of the workshop due to a customs procedure on the course material from Geneva, facilitators were forced to re-arrange the workshop schedule. Because of the preliminary visits to the various countries, participants were not penalized and were still able to attend.

This workshop was an opportunity for faculty members not only to exchange experiences between schools, but also allowed teachers in the same school to develop working relationships and to plan training activities together.

All the participants were pleased with the workshop and noted that the methods used for teaching could be apply to another subjects besides CDD, such as ARI or malaria.

One of the participants' concerns was the availability of course material for teachers and students. During a preliminary visit, UNICEF expressed an interest in supporting course material costs.

In order to reach our objectives, follow-up visits must be carried out to the various participant schools to:

- assess progress made regarding the workplan developed during the workshop (first visit), and
- evaluate the actual teaching (second visit).

According to discussions with WHO, BASICS is expected to support the training costs for the next workshop(s).

To conduct the next workshop WHO and BASICS have to:

- agree on the feasibility,
- choose dates,
- select participating countries and workshop site,
- plan and prepare preliminary visits, and
- organize workshop.