

Capacity development in the conduct of clinical trials in Africa

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Objectives

- **The main objective** is to develop the capacities of Universities/research institutions in Africa to conduct clinical trials in general, and more specifically on HIV, malaria and TB
- **Secondary objectives** are:
 - To provide adapted materials and skills for the implementation of practical and theoretical courses (Msc) on clinicals trials in African Universities
 - To develop the networking between Francophone and Anglophone universities (North and South)

Methods

This project will build on a Distance-Learning (DL) Masters course in clinical trials run by the LSHTM

- **1st step: translation** of the core units of the DL materials into French (validation, learning technologist)
- **2nd step: conduct of 2 workshops** (South Africa & Burkina) to develop the capacities for institutions to use the learning materials for face-to-face teaching of clinical trials methods
 - 5 days in institutions with existing post-graduate courses
 - Audience: 10-15 experienced University staff members
 - Based on Wits experience on adapting DL material for face-to-face teaching
 - Combination of different teaching techniques

Methods (2)

- **3rd step: development of 3 additional advanced modules:**
 - Practical aspects of conducting trials
(ethics, community involvement, field organisation, etc...)
 - Practical module (hands-on experience)
Attachment to a field site, real-life situation
 - Disease-specific module (HIV, malaria, TB)
Issues particular to trials conducted for these diseases
- **4th step: provision of 2 new Masters course in clinical trials:**
 - Legon University in Accra, Ghana
 - University of Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso
 - 1 year course, approval through 3 committees

Results

- Funding obtained from EDCTP, ongoing project
- Step 1 is almost completed, validation in process
- Workshops for trainers are planned for end of 2007
- A task force including all institutions has been put in place to develop the advanced modules
- Project expected to be achieved at the end of 2008

Discussion

- Innovative collaborative work between Francophone and Anglophone institutions (Burkina, Ghana South, Africa)
- The MSc course will aim to provide students with a theoretical and practical understanding in the design, conduct, analysis and interpretation of randomised controlled trials in health interventions.
- Several clinical trials planned in the next 4 years in the 3 African sites on HIV prevention, malaria and TB
- Sustainability: material and initial training provided for teaching, tuition fees, other mechanisms explored

Future perspectives

- Provision of a DL MSc course on clinical trials at the University of Montpellier
- Develop experience and networking to other African Francophone & Anglophone countries
- Development of South-South University networking for teaching and provision of students, scholarships
- Completeness of important randomised controlled trials in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Johannesburg