

Obgyn training in Sub-Saharan Africa bolstered by new collections shared both online and offline

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High-quality, obstetric care is a critical factor in reducing maternal and newborn deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa, but local barriers like the availability of training materials, licensing costs and unreliable Internet access can prevent incoming obstetricians and gynecologists and midwives from being trained with the best educational materials available.

Now, providers and students in low-resource countries will have access to high-quality academic learning and teaching materials through a new collection created by the University of Michigan's 1000+ OBGYNs Project - a network of American and African universities preparing to train more than 1,000 new Obgyns in the region in 10 years.

Through a grant from the World Bank, the U-M Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology partnered with the Department of Learning Health Sciences and the Open.Michigan Initiative within Medical School Information Services to develop additional collections to specifically support graduate medical education for OBGYNs in sub-Saharan Africa. Through this collaboration, the 1000+ OBGYN Project was able to effectively draw upon existing open educational resources from Michigan, Ghana, Ethiopia, and other medical schools around the world and to review, curate, and organize them for a learner audience of OBGYN residents.

The four new collections developed by this partnership cover a diverse range of subjects, including abnormal uterine bleeding, pregnancy complications, vaginal surgeries, pelvic masses, newborn care, postpartum care and family planning. All materials are publicly available, free and licensed for students, teachers and practitioners to copy and modify to suit their curricular context within their own institutions.

Partnership with the Global Library of Women's Medicine: USB Distribution

In addition to making this new collection of materials available online, the 1000+ OBGYN Project partnered with the Global Library of Women's Medicine (GLOWM.com), which has also developed a large and expertly-curated collection of free women's health materials - including textbooks, training videos and tutorials - on their website. Recently GLOWM developed an initiative to expand access to their online collection by compressing the entire library onto USB flash drives, 500 of which they have now distributed globally, particularly to women's health professionals in Africa through their Ambassador program.

The 1000+ OBGYN Project worked with GLOWM to combine these collections into the USBs sent to the GLOWM distribution network. This project is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

"There is an urgent need to train Obgyns in sub-Saharan Africa, but their institutions don't always have access to the same body of educational materials as doctors in developed countries have," says Frank Anderson, M.D., MPH, associate professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the U-M Medical School and director of the 1000 + OBYGN Project.

"Many newborn and maternal deaths are preventable. We want to ensure that future Obgyns in low resource countries have access to the same high-quality learning materials available here so they are equipped to provide the best care possible for mothers and babies."

Sub-Saharan Africa faces some of the highest rates of neonatal deaths in the world, with more than 1 million [newborn deaths](#) reported in 2013. The stillbirth rate in the region is nearly 10 times higher than that of developed countries.

The 1000+ OBGYN Project started in 2012, working to identify steps to significantly increase access to comprehensive obstetric care. Based on the success of training and retaining OBGYNs in Ghana, the project has mobilized obstetricians from 14 Sub-Saharan obstetrics and gynecology departments, OBGYN partners from high-resource programs, and a number of national and international professional and expert clinical organizations. This network is intended to provide the resources and support to train more than 1,000 additional Obgyns in Sub-Saharan Africa over the next 10 years.

More information: open.umich.edu/education/med/1000obgyns

Provided by University of Michigan Health System

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