

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND – 2013 GRANT REPORT

AFRICAN FEDERATION OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE (AFEM): HANDBOOK OF ACUTE AND EMERGENCY CARE

FACEM DR VILLIERS SMIT

1. BACKGROUND

Africa suffers from a disproportionately high burden of acute and emergency disease, but – with one or two exceptions – lacks dedicated emergency care systems. The dire lack of medical and nursing staff has been compounded by lack of prioritization of emergency care systems development over recent decades. As a result, millions of acutely ill and injured patients receive poor emergency care in health facilities each year.

Few providers in Africa have received dedicated training in Emergency Care despite the fact that they manage medical emergencies on a regular basis. If they did have access to any high quality training or reference materials, it was materials that were developed in high-income settings with limited or no applicability to the African context. These resources fail to address much of the regional disease burden, and recommend diagnostic and management pathways that are often not available.

2. AIM

To help address this need, the African Federation for Emergency Medicine (AFEM) has set a scientific agenda to increase the capacity of front line emergency care providers (doctors, nurses, ems and clinical officers). Central to that agenda is the development and dissemination of the Oxford University Press AFEM Handbook of Acute and Emergency Care – the first and only handbook targeted at context appropriate diagnosis and management of emergency conditions.

3. ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

AFEM designed the handbook to be accessible, easy to use, stratified by resource level, and appropriate to both the burden of disease and the diagnostic and treatment modalities available in most clinical settings in sub-Saharan Africa. This handbook is the first to offer doctors, nurses and clinical officers management strategies based on available resources. It leads providers through a rapid systematic and integrated approach to stabilisation and resuscitation of patients that has been stratified to three resource levels; where there are no available resources, where there are minimal resources, and where there are full resources.

At AFEM's annual conference in November 2013, the AFEM Handbook of Acute and Emergency Care was officially launched. The total cost for the AFEM Handbook of Acute and Emergency Care was 2.25 million rand, of which 1.8 million was budgeted for printing and 450,000 was budgeted for the cost of shipping, distribution, and taxes. The Abbott Foundation provided a grant for \$250,000 US dollars that was used to purchase and distribute handbooks across Africa.

4. UTILISATION OF FUNDS

The Australian IDF awarded \$5000 Australian dollars to support the distribution of the AFEM handbook. At \$25 US dollars a copy, the Australian IDF grant bought 200 copies that will be distributed throughout 10 African countries: Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

Distribution of the handbooks is well underway. Of the 200 Australian IDF handbooks, at this time 5 copies have gone to Botswana, 16 to the Democratic Republic of Congo, 20 to Ethiopia, 25 to Ghana, 25 to Kenya, 20 to Rwanda, 25 to Tanzania, 24 to Uganda, and 20 to Zambia. The remaining 10 copies each for Botswana and Madagascar will be distributed within the next month.

5. OTHER AUSTRALIAN CONTRIBUTIONS

Australian physicians also made significant contributions to the writing and editing of the AFEM handbook. De Villiers Smit, emergency physician and Director of Emergency Services at Alfred Health, Melbourne, was the section editor for the respiratory section and authored several respiratory chapters. Gerard O'Reilly, emergency physician at The Alfred Hospital Emergency and Trauma Centre, Melbourne, was the section editor for the trauma section and authored several trauma chapters as well.

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If the handbooks are delivered to practitioners with internet access they can register their handbooks, which allows for handbook tracking. Below is the most current map of registered handbook copies in Africa. (note: not all practitioners are able to register their handbooks)

AFEM is currently in contact with a shipping company who will assist with further handbook distribution. The handbooks dissemination will be facilitated by the AFEM network of acute and emergency care practitioners.



Emergency care practitioners outside of Africa are able to purchase the AFEM Handbook via the Oxford University Press Website, amazon.com, and amazon.co.uk. The handbook will soon be released in an electronic format that will be available on iTunes as well. 10% of the AFEM Handbook sales go directly to AFEM, and will allow AFEM to pursue the development and distribution of future educational products. AFEM is registered as a non-profit organisation in South Africa. Handbook sales have only just begun, so we are not yet in a position to report back on the status of sales.

7. PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

The African Federation for Emergency Medicine (AFEM) and Oxford University Press have recently published the AFEM Handbook of Acute and Emergency Care, the first and only handbook targeted at context appropriate diagnosis and management of emergency conditions in Africa.

Africa suffers from a disproportionately high burden of acute and emergency disease, but – with one or two exceptions – lacks dedicated emergency care systems. Few providers in Africa have received dedicated training in Emergency Care despite the fact that they manage medical emergencies on a regular basis. As a result, millions of acutely ill and injured patients receive poor emergency care in health facilities each year. Previously, the only available training or reference materials for healthcare providers were ones developed in high-income settings with limited or no applicability to the African context.

One of AFEM's chief objectives is to increase the capacity of front line emergency care providers in Africa, and the AFEM handbook was created to assist with this goal. AFEM designed the handbook to be accessible, easy to use, and appropriate to both the burden of disease and the range of resources available in clinical settings in sub-Saharan Africa. This handbook is the first to offer doctors, nurses, and clinical officers management strategies based on available resources.

The Australian IDF generously awarded \$5000 Australian dollars to support the distribution of the AFEM handbook. At \$25 US dollars a copy, the Australian IDF grant bought 200 copies that will be distributed throughout 10 African countries: Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. These handbooks will provide invaluable support for a wide range of practitioners as they provide emergency medical care for acutely ill and injured patients.

