Global Emergency Medicine Literature Review, Tanzania and adopting delegates

AJEM does not make a habit of actively promoting materials published in other emergency medicine (EM) journals, although every now and again an exception is in order. The body of published literature relevant to the nascent field of Global Emergency Medicine (GEM) continues to grow every year. As busy clinicians, academics, and research scientists, most of us find it difficult to stay on top of the huge number of journals and publications that come out every day; we also find it difficult to read articles published in languages other than our own. In addition, the wide range of both research and policy development undertaken by governments, inter-governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) never makes it to publication, and often remains completely inaccessible to us. The Global Emergency Medicine Literature Review (GEMLR) (formerly known as the International Emergency Medicine Literature Review) was developed in 2005 to help EM providers navigate the growing abundance of international emergency medicine literature. Now in its eighth year, the GEMLR highlights and disseminates high quality global EM research in the fields of system development, disaster and humanitarian response, and emergency care in resource-limited settings.

Each year, the GEMLR conducts a Medline search for articles published in that calendar year, utilizing a set of international and EM search terms and a manual search of journals that have produced large numbers of international emergency medicine articles for past reviews. The search produces about 7000 articles, which are then divided amongst approximately 20 reviewers who screen them using established inclusion and exclusion criteria to select articles relevant to the field of GEM, and in particular to the subcategories of EM development, disaster and humanitarian response, and emergency care in resource-limited settings.

Based on the linguistic capacity of the reviewers and editors, the review’s search is currently limited to articles published in English, Spanish, French, Japanese, Chinese (Mandarin), German and Dutch. Each year approximately 200 articles are selected by at least one reviewer and approved by an editor for scoring. Two independent reviewers use a standardized and predetermined set of criteria to score each article.

Africa plays an important role in the GEMLR. The 2011 search produced 7924 articles, from which 24 articles were chosen for full review. A substantial proportion of the articles selected involved research conducted in Africa (29%) and by African authors (17%). It is hoped that the already substantial African contribution will increase through the efforts of AFEM.

Currently, GEMLR is also working to systematically incorporate grey literature into the review: searching the websites and archives of a range of governmental and inter-governmental agencies, as well as NGOs, think-tanks and policy institutes to find reports relevant to the field of GEM that have not been published in an indexed journal. GEMLR is overseen by an editorial board composed of a diverse group of highly experienced international emergency medicine physicians from all over the world, and the bulk of the work is performed by a core group of 20 reviewers. The review is published annually in Academic Emergency Medicine, both in print and online with universal (non-subscription) access.1–6

Each year, the articles selected by the GEMLR represent examples of high quality international emergency medicine research that is currently ongoing in high, middle, and low-income countries alike. GEMLR is not intended to be a systematic review or a clinical guideline, but it is instead meant to be a selection of current high-quality global EM literature, and strives to foster further growth in the field, highlight evidence-based practice, and encourage discourse. We encourage all of you to read it, and for those who are keen – join the GEMLR team.

Our country’s focus in this issue is on Tanzania, perhaps better known for the small, but idyllic island of Zanzibar off its East coast. Bret Nicks and colleagues deliver a factual insight into the current emergency care situation in Tanzania and the development of postgraduate training in EM over the last three years. It is notable that it was the collaboration between local, private and international bodies that was
responsible for the establishment of EM within such a short space of time (since 2009). The next challenge for the Emergency Medicine Association of Tanzania (EMAT) will be to include political figures in the process to promote EM to a national priority. This will allow better access to various levels of the Tanzanian public health care system and channel funding towards training and development of EM. Without a doubt, this task will largely fall to the newly qualified Tanzanian EM consultants.

The editors would also like to mention the Adopt-a-Delegate peer to peer sponsorship project, which will be a part of the upcoming African Conference on Emergency Medicine (AfCEM2012, Accra, Ghana, 30 October to 1 November 2012). This flagship African Federation for Emergency Medicine (AFEM) project, part-sponsors the attendance of emergency health care delegates from disadvantaged, emerging economies, through sponsorship from peers from developed settings (part-sponsor as it only covers conference and accommodation costs, allowing sponsored delegates to contribute to their attendance by financing their own travel costs). The process allows improved professional links (through the sponsor and attendance) and an international standard educational opportunity. Adopt-a-Delegate has already allowed sponsorship of 42 delegates at previous conferences in 2007 and 2009 and it is hoped that it would also contribute to the success of AfCEM2012 allowing the range of attendees to be truly representative of emergency health care in Africa. Please visit www.afcem2012.com for more information on this project.

References


Gabrielle Jacquet *

Adam Levine

Stevan Bruijns

Lee Wallis

Department of Emergency Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD, USA

Department of Emergency Medicine, Brown University Alpert Medical School, Providence, RI, USA

International Medical Corps, Santa Monica, CA, USA

Specialist Emergency Physician, University of Cape Town, South Africa

University of Cape Town, South Africa

Stellenbosch University, South Africa

* Tel.: +1 8025786529.

Email address: gabrielle.jacquet@gmail.com

Received 5 August 2012; accepted 5 August 2012

Available online 30 August 2012