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## North-South cooperation on transfusion and hematology teaching: A Benin experience

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**Background:** Hematologic diseases are a significant part of health disorders in Benin. As an example, anemia is the second cause of hospitalization, measuring up to 7.9% all over the country (National Plan of Sanitary Development, 2009-2018). By contrast, there is only one active hematologist in the country. Thanks to two partnerships, on one hand between the health sciences faculty in Cotonou (Benin) and the medicine one in Tours (France) and on the other hand between the Beninese Blood Transfusion National Agency and the French Blood Establishment, a first blood transfusion and hematology formation was held in Cotonou on December 2014. Among other benefits, was created a Hematology-Transfusion network in order to facilitate relations between Beninese hospital doctors with the support of the two French partner institutions.

**Method:** With the assistance of the Ministry of Health and the Health Sciences Faculty team on Anesthesiology, National Blood Transfusion Agency and Blood Diseases Service at the National University Hospital of Cotonou organized training for medical and paramedical personnel from 15 to 17 December 2014. This initiative received support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

**Results:** Forty six hospital doctors, divided into 26 from public hospitals and 10 from private hospitals took part in this first training in Hematology and Blood Transfusion. A French delegation made by Professors Philippe Colombat and Jorge Domenech from the Faculty of Medicine of Tours, Jean-Yves PY and Bernadette Martenot from French Blood Establishment gave support to ten teachers from Health Sciences Faculty in Cotonou for this training. Several themes with clinical cases were the menu of exchanges. Discussions focused in particular the needs of labile blood products in Benin, different types of anemia and their mechanisms and diagnosis, classification of malignant blood diseases, strategies for prevention or anticipation of labile blood products needs and their production and conservation. The most important decision from participants at the end of the training was the establishment of Hematology-Transfusion network. Currently, 24 practitioners are listed in the Facebook directory network, of which 11 did not take part in the formation in December 2014.

**Conclusion:** The effects of the shortage of staff specialized in health services can be lessened with the support of cooperation between North and South.

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