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Scott McNabb, Emory University
Ghada Farhat, Emory University
O’Namusisi, African Field Epidemiology Network, Kampala, Uganda.

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Overview of the design and development of public health case studies

Ghada N Farhat1,*, Olivia Namusisi2, Scott JN McNabb1

1Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health, Atlanta, GA, USA, 2African Field Epidemiology Network, Kampala, Uganda

*Corresponding author:
Ghada N Farhat, Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health, Atlanta, GA, USA

The newly developed methodology – to be published soon – distills best practices and provides a comprehensive, step-by-step approach to case study development. The methodology was piloted in a 2-week course in August 2015 (Case Study Design and Development Course [2]) delivered to public health professionals and educators from various African universities and Field Epidemiology and Laboratory Training Programs (FELTPs), as well as the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The course, conducted at Emory University, used didactic and hands-on training to develop competency in case study design and development and other pedagogical skills. It guided participants through this step-by-step approach culminating in thoughtful, detailed, locally relevant, culturally tailored, country-specific case studies; they are published here. Course participants facilitated their draft case studies in class and received peer feedback on content and delivery. By the end of the course, participants produced revised case studies ready for use in African FELTPs and public health training programs.

Three cohorts have been trained so far in 2015, 2016, and 2017. A total of 42 participants representing 12 African countries, as well as three participants from the U.S. CDC developed a diverse set of 29 case studies. The inaugural cohort in 2015 produced the 11 case studies published in this special issue of the Pan African Medical Journal. Plans to publish those of the second (2016) and third (2017) cohorts are underway. These case studies and future ones will be accessible by FELTPs across Africa and the world. We trust they will help the next generation of African disease detectives.
Competing interest
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