Medical Education Conference in Rwanda



Deans-who attended the MedEdAfrica conference

From March 24 to 25, 2025, the Kigali Convention Centre in Rwanda hosted the inaugural **Advancing Medical Education in Africa Conference (MedEdAfrica 2025)**. Organized by the University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) in collaboration with the Rwanda Ministry of Health, the conference brought together medical educators, healthcare professionals, policymakers, students, and innovators from across the continent and beyond. The central theme, "Innovation in Medical Education Practices," underscored the urgent need to transform Africa's medical education systems to better address the continent's health challenges in Medical Education.

The subthemes were: New Technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Simulation, Leadership in Medical Education, Integrating Modern Global Health Challenges in Medical Curricula and Embracing Social Medicine in Medical Education

The conference brought together over 600 delegates, including deans and faculty from 115 medical schools across 32 countries, 36 student leaders, senior policymakers, international partners, and experts in global health and education. Together, they shaped a shared vision to strengthen medical education systems across the continent through innovation, collaboration, and leadership grounded in Africa's realities and potential. The rich program included several formats in form of plenaries, breakout sessions and poster presentations.

The conference addressed a number of issues:

Addressing Africa's Health Workforce Crisis

Africa bears 24% of the global disease burden yet possesses only 4% of the world's medical workforce. This stark disparity was a focal point of the conference, emphasizing the necessity to expand and enhance medical training across the continent. The conference aimed to catalyze efforts to build a robust healthcare system capable of meeting the diverse needs of African populations.

Embracing Technological Innovations

One of the key themes explored was the integration of new technologies and simulation in medical education. Discussions centered on the adoption of artificial intelligence, e-learning platforms, big data analytics, and virtual/augmented reality to revolutionize medical training. These technologies are seen as pivotal in decentralizing education and making high-quality training accessible across various regions in Africa.

Integrating Social Medicine and Global Health Challenges

Sessions delved into the integration of social and community medicine into medical curricula, highlighting the importance of community-based models and liberal arts in developing well-rounded healthcare professionals. Additionally, the conference addressed the incorporation

of global health issues such as One Health, climate change, and pandemics into medical training, preparing students to tackle emerging health threats.

Promoting Research and Faculty Development

The conference underscored the need to promote research and evidence-based practices in medical education. Strategies to empower faculty development were discussed, aiming to enhance medical education strategies that curb the migration of healthcare practitioners and skilled educators to regions outside Africa.

Strengthening Leadership and Collaboration

The conference emphasized the importance of unified leadership among African medical schools. A significant milestone was the formation of the Consortium of Medical Schools in Africa (CoMSA). This consortium aims to foster ongoing collaboration, shared learning, and the advancement of educational innovations.

Consortium of Medical Schools in Africa (CoMSA)

This conference marked the official launch of the Consortium of Medical Schools in Africa (CoMSA), a continent-wide platform aimed at transforming medical education across Africa. After the launch of CoMSA, the founding members elected the consortium's first leadership team to guide its development as follow:

- Prof. Lionel Green-Thompson – President, University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Dr. Yvonne Akotoa Dei-Adomakoh – Vice President & Chair, Audit and Compliance Committee, University of Ghana, Ghana
- Prof. Abebe Bekele – Secretary General & Chair, Advocacy and Partnerships, University of Global Health Equity, Rwanda
- Dr. Salma Abdi Mahmoud – Deputy Secretary General, University of Zanzibar, Tanzania
- Dr. Angela Frank-Briggs – Treasurer & Chair, Finance Committee, College of Health Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria
- Prof. Lukoye Atwoli – Chair, Leadership & Professional Development Committee, Aga Khan University, Kenya
- Prof. Titus Ibekwe – Chair, Research and Innovations Committee, University of Abuja, Nigeria
- Prof. Choukem Simon Pierre – Chair, Education and Curriculum Committee, University of Dschang, Cameroon

Conclusion

MedEdAfrica 2025 marked a significant step towards transforming medical education in Africa. By embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and addressing systemic challenges, the conference laid the groundwork for a more equitable and effective healthcare education system across the continent. The establishment of the deans' consortium and the emphasis on integrating technology and social medicine into curricula signal a promising future for medical education in Africa. The plan is to have this conference annualy.

