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RAISING AWARENESS IN BENIN SCHOOLS

In Benin, hemophilia is a pathology still very little known by both health workers and the general population. Knowing that the prevalence of hemophilia in the general population is approximately 1/10,000 inhabitants, the number of hemophiliacs in Benin should be approximately 1149 but in 2020, only 48 hemophiliacs were registered in Benin. However, our culture requires that all young boys be systematically circumcised. This practice is often carried out without any medical precautions at home, either by traditional healers or nurses not authorized for this act. Thus, it is in this context that hemorrhagic complications sometimes arise, sometimes persistent in some children, which can sometimes lead to death. For children with a hemorrhagic syndrome and whose parents have the financial means to take them to hospital, a transfusion of fresh frozen plasma is carried out urgently on these children to help stop the bleeding and to prevent anemia often as a result of the hemorrhage.

Only those who manage to reach the National University Hospital Center of Cotonou can sometimes benefit from the injections of anti-hemophilic drugs offered by the World Federation of Hemophilia when these are available. However, in this hospital, all the patients who consult for a hemorrhagic syndrome do not succeed in benefiting from the adequate treatment because all the costs are covered, in particular the consultation, the biological examination and the care. However, there are many children whose parents do not have the financial means

to pay these laboratory examination costs, in particular the dosage of factor VIII and/or IX and that of Willebrand factor. Finally, for the same reasons of lack of financial means, there are many Beninese hemophiliacs who are very poorly followed because they do not have the means to pay the costs of systematic consultations and therefore consult only in the event of a potentially fatal haemorrhagic syndrome. This situation means that a certain number of several hemarthroses are often poorly treated at home. The Association Béninoise des Hémophiles, which I have had the honor to direct since its creation in December 2015 with the support of the Hematology Department of the CNHU of Cotonou, directed by Professor Dorothee Kindé Gazard, former Minister of Health. She brings us a lot of her dedication as well as her expertise; among the many activities that we organize within our community, I would like to talk to you about raising awareness in schools, the case of the Hamadiya school in Parakou.





Raising awareness is one of the means by which we manage to reach the population to share information on bleeding diseases and the methods to adopt to live and carry out treatment with the pathology of hemophilia. In accordance with the pre-established program, we, the members of the Board of the Benin Association of Hemophiliacs, met the students of the Hamadiya school and the teaching staff. Hamadiya School is a private primary school located in Parakou department of Borgou which has 305 pupils. We had raised awareness on December 08, 2021 for a period of one hour. We defined the disease of hemophilia, explained the manifestations and the consequences which it can lead to, if we do not follow the treatment properly. We also explained the steps of the association in this fight in Benin to receive benefits from other associations, in particular from the WFH, which supplies us with a lot for treatment for everybody, and at the end of the session we taught the methods to adopt for a better grasp of the pathology. We also made teachers aware of the consequences of corporal punishment on a hemophiliac in schools. At the end of our presentation, the students and teachers asked a lot of questions about hemophilia and its care, which showed us that the message had got through and that our objectives have now been achieved at the Hamadiya school in Parakou, the students and the teachers are no longer ignorant about the disease of hemophilia and have promised to relay the information around it to their respective families. We members of the ABH came out satisfied with this awareness session in order to continue our awareness adventure in another school, always with the purpose of popularizing the hemophilic pathology and making its existence known, and that it is not a spiritual disease as we say in our country.