# 5th AFHEA Biennial Scientific Conference

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Theme: Securing PHC for all: the foundation for making progress on UHC in Africa

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| **Deadline abstract:** | 31/08/2018 |
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| **Title of paper** | Demonstrating the benefits of investing in rehabilitation: evidences from 3 Sub-Saharan African countries studies |

**Abstract**

**Background**

Integrated rehabilitation services in the health system are one of the challenges of the universal health coverage and the WHO dynamic “Rehabilitation 2030”. Persons with disabilities are the most expose to catastrophic financial risk, and it is particularly due to additional specific care needed and a high unemployment rate.

**Aims and objectives of the research**

This study aims to assist rehabilitation stakeholders to strengthen the health system to provide rehabilitation services through a situation assessment of the financial access to rehabilitation services in low-income Sub-Saharan African countries. This study seeks to describe and analyze the rehabilitation sector in financial and economic terms, and identifies its strength, weakness and priorities.

**Methods**

The analysis focused on three low-income economies, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, and Madagascar where economic studies were conducted respectively in 2015, 2017 and 2018. Policy documents, past research and studies on financial access to rehabilitation services have been studied. Interviews, with semi-structured questionnaires, have been organized with state and non-state actors involved within the rehabilitation sector. This evaluation analyzed the financing of this sector for all its components from human resources to social protection programs in aim to highlight the estimated gap of investment for this sector.

**Results**

This study highlighted some convergences in the rehabilitation sector between these three countries. We observed a lack of protection mechanisms for persons who need rehabilitation care, in particular for prosthetics and orthotics, in addition to geographical barrier that reduce access to these healthcare services. Another strong point of convergence is related to a shortage of human resources for rehabilitation care that need to be financed. In Madagascar, more than 24 000 physiotherapists are missing to satisfy the demand for rehabilitation care in the country. A large investment from the government is required to cover the various needs of this sector. In Rwanda, there is a needed investment from 20% to 36% of the Ministry of Health budget.

**Conclusion**

Despite significant efforts from governments to legally formalize and improve rights of persons with disabilities, applications of laws, and taking care of this issue remains limited. Many opportunities exist to improve accessibility to quantitative and qualitative rehabilitation services in these countries, national efforts must strengthen the health system in order to provide available rehabilitation services at all levels of healthcare. Analyses of financing of rehabilitation services in the health system provide guidance for the government to determine appropriate financing volume and mechanisms, especially for informal sector persons. The objective of universal health coverage will not be reached if rehabilitation is not a priority of the government.

*Key words: Rehabilitation, equity, UHC, health financing, social protections, sustainable financing, persons with disabilities, Africa*