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Abstract

Introduction: Relative to the exponentially growing African population, there is a severe scarcity of otolaryngology providers, with an estimated ratio of 1.2 million persons per otolaryngology provider and 0.8 million persons per audiologist in sub-Saharan Africa. Otologic expertise is especially limited, with currently only one dedicated otology surgical training fellowship in Africa. We aimed to link the broader community of otology and audiology providers in Africa through the creation of an otology- and audiology-specific professional and educational network.

Methods: The African Otological Society (AfOS) was founded in November 2023 and utilizes an online-based platform. Membership is open to all African and international partners invested in addressing otology and audiology patient needs in Africa. There are no required fees for participation.

Results: There are currently 228 members in the AfOS with representation from 23 countries. Members participate in monthly, hour-long online/virtual meetings during which a given member presents on the otologic and audiologic capacities of their country followed by an otology and/or audiology related presentation with group discussion. Society members have access to free online educational resources through the website (www.afotos.org) including the University of Cape Town otolaryngology lecture series, as well as an online forum to aid in clinical discussions. Development of clinical practice guidelines specific to otologic care in a limited resource environment is also actively ongoing.

Conclusions: AfOS provides a novel platform for otolaryngology providers to not only share in educational and humanitarian resources, but also engage in training opportunities, clinical discussions, and expand the outreach of otology and audiology care in Africa.

Introduction

- Many African countries face a severe shortage of otolaryngology (ENT) and audiology providers relative to their rapidly growing population. An estimated 91% of African countries have an ENT clinician density of 1 or fewer per 100,000 population (Figure 1A),¹ and 56% report fewer than one ENT specialist per million.² Similarly, 78% of African countries have less than 1 audiologist per million.²
- The shortage of providers, and *only one otology surgical training fellowship*, in Africa has resulted in significant barriers to timely and equitable ear and hearing care, contributing to a disproportionate burden of preventable and treatable hearing loss in African populations.^{3,4}
- The mission of the African Otological Society (AfOS) is to establish a community of African providers and international partners to address otology and audiology patient and educational need in Africa.⁵**

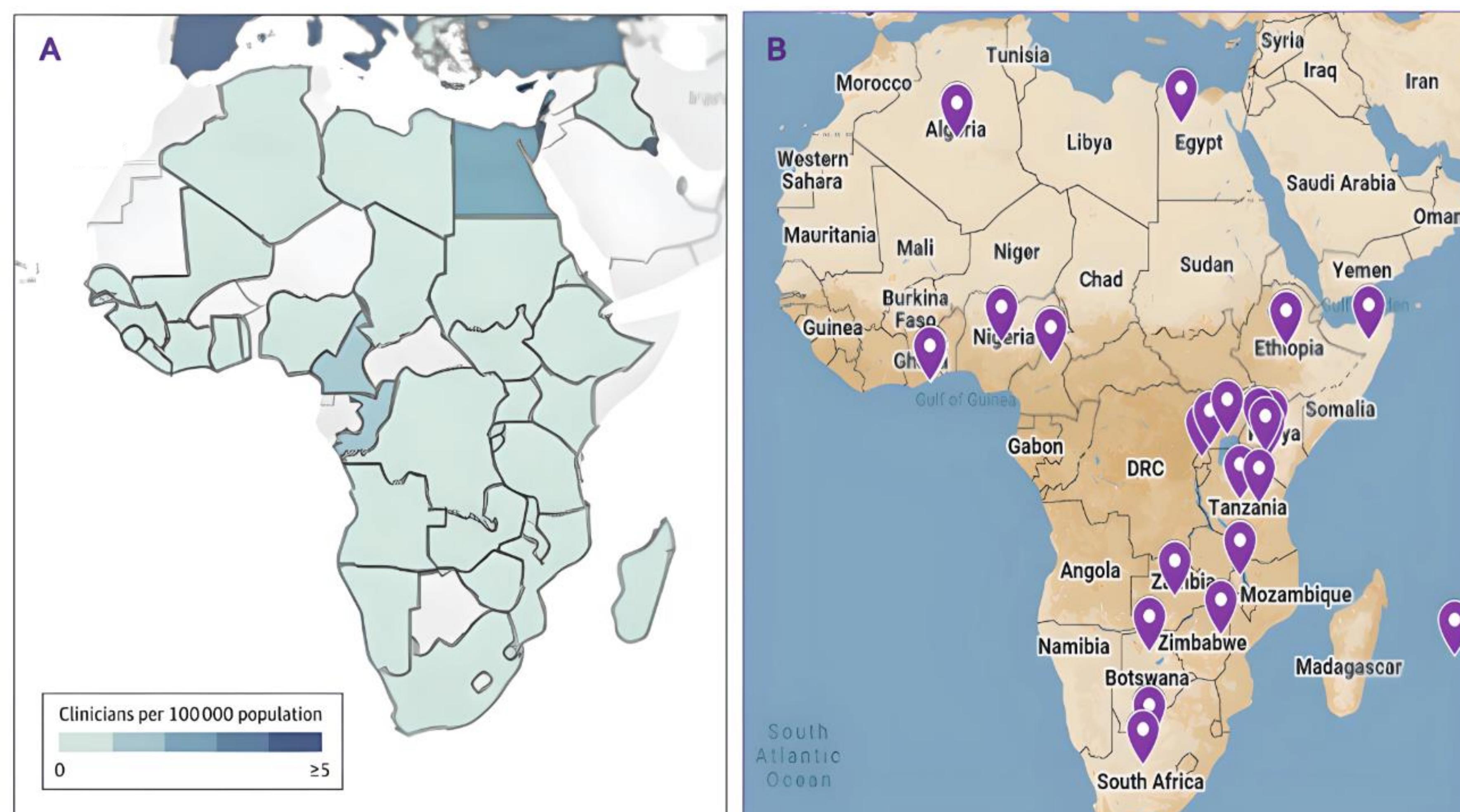


Figure 1. Population Density of ENT Providers in Africa. (A) The population density of ENT providers in the African continent.¹ (B) Purple markers indicate the location of African Otological Society members.

Methods

- AfOS was founded by Dr. Gregory Basura in November 2023, with membership open to all African and international partners.
- AfOS uses an online-based platform located at www.afotos.org (see QR code). There is no cost for participation.



Results

- There are currently 228 members in AfOS with representation from 23 countries, both in Africa and around the world (Figure 1B). 15 of 23 countries are in sub-Saharan Africa (65%).

Key Activities

- Members participate in **monthly, hour-long virtual meetings**, each of which focus on the otologic and audiologic capacities of a different African country, followed by a group discussion. Examples of recent presentations are shown in Table 1. Presentation recordings are available on the AfOS website.

Table 1. Recent AfOS Monthly Presentations.

Date	Country of Presenter	Topic of Presentation
Sept. 2025	1) Morocco 2) Kenya	1) Africa NASMAA Program for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired: Achievements and Projects 2) Expanding Access to Cochlear Implants in Kenya: A Multi-Stakeholder Approach
July 2025	Tanzania	Overview of Otolaryngology and Audiology in Tanzania
June 2025	USA / Ghana	Conducting Community Hearing Screenings Using Portable Technology
May 2025	Ethiopia	Otolaryngology Practice in Ethiopia
April 2025	Malawi	1) Otolaryngology and Audiology Practices in Malawi 2) Cholesteatoma / Granulation Tissue in the Ear
March 2025	Ghana	1) Audiology in Ghana: The Current State 2) A Case of Fibrous Dysplasia of the Temporal Bone
Feb. 2025	Nigeria	1) Manpower Development in Audiology 2) Field Experience in General Audiology Practice in Nigeria 3) Experience with Implants in Audiology in Nigeria

- The AfOS website offers a range of educational resources, including access to the **weekly University of Cape Town lecture series** for their Otology fellowship, as well as a **Clinical Open Forum**, where members can engage in case discussions and exchange insights on patient medical management and surgical care.

Conclusion

- The African Otological Society serves as a novel platform for ENT and audiology professionals committed to advancing ear and hearing care across the African continent through collaboration, education, and expanding access to training opportunities (www.afotos.org).
- Future objectives of AfOS include developing Africa-specific clinical guidelines for otologic care and continuing to promote specialized ENT training, clinical discussions, and community outreach.

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