



African Bone and Joint Infection Network: A Chapter of the European Bone and Joint Infection Society

Terms of Reference

Context

Since its inception the European Bone and Joint Infection Society's (EBJIS) mission has been to support education and scientific collaboration from all over the world to improve the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of bone and joint infection. Bone and joint infection (including fracture related infection, osteomyelitis and prosthetic joint infection) occurs in regions of the world with the most limited resources to provide high quality care. The particular challenges faced by low resource settings in the prevention and treatment of bone and joint infection (BJI) must be addressed to ensure equity in healthcare delivery. The African Bone and Joint Network is a group of individuals who have come together under the auspices of EBJIS to improve BJI care in the African continent.

Purpose and objectives

The aim of this network is to provide a forum for collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and ideas relating to BJI prevention, diagnosis and treatment in Africa.

The five key objectives are:

1. Networking and collaboration to facilitate connections between clinicians to share best practice
2. Research to build an evidence base relevant to low resource settings and to gather data that can assist in influencing healthcare policy in the region
3. Develop and support context appropriate guidelines
4. Education and training on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of BJI
5. To raise awareness about the burden of disease and impact of BJI in Africa and to promote the provision of the required resources

Values

Collaboration: We will seek to work collaboratively with other groups, other disciplines and other specialties wherever possible.

Transparency: We will be open about our approach, our aims and our work.

Inclusive: We will make space for all interested parties regardless of language, gender, sexual orientation, race, or socioeconomic group.

Science driven: We will seek to always work with the best available evidence.

Synergy: To bring together the necessary experts and resources to achieve our objectives.

Governance

The African Bone and Joint Infection Network (ABJIN) will function as a regional chapter of the European Bone and Joint Infection Society (EBJIS).

Its establishment and functioning will be coordinated by the ABJIN Steering Committee and its work supported by Working Group Leads.

Founding Executive Committee

The founding ABJIN Executive Committee is a group of EBJIS members with a vested interest in the care of BJI patients in Africa.

The founding Executive Committee comprises the following Members:

- a) Committee Lead
- e) Working Group Leads
- f) Other Members

The founding ABJIN Executive Committee will work to create an 8-member Executive Committee by 2026 with the following roles:

- a) President
- b) Vice-president
- c) Secretary General
- d) Five other ordinary members, including at least 2 other Founding Executive Committee Members

The Members of the Executive Committee are in post for a period of two years and shall be eligible for re-nomination twice consecutively. The Vice-President, after two years term, *ex officio*, becomes the President for the following two years and then Past-President for two years.

When Executive Committee's Members resign during their term of office, the Executive Committee may co-opt a new member, to serve for the remaining period. The vacated Executive Committee position will then be available to fill at the next Annual Meeting.

Founding Executive Committee Selection Process

Vacancies on the Executive Committee may only be filled by ABJIN Members.

New committee members may be proposed by any existing committee member and seconded by another. Any ABJIN Member may also apply as a candidate.

Committee member proposals and applications will be shared with the Executive Committee and discussed at the subsequent quarterly meeting and a decision made.

Future Executive Committees

Composition

ABJIN Executive Committee will consist of 8 members with a vested interest in the care of BJI patients in Africa.

At least four of the 8 Executive Committee members must be based in Africa. The ExCo must ensure geographic balance such that there is representation from North, South, East and West Africa.

EBJIS membership is mandatory for at least one of the ABJIN presidential line positions at any given time as well as at least one other Executive Committee member.

Role Allocation:

- a) President
- b) Vice-president

- c) Immediate past president
- d) Secretary General/ Treasurer
- e) Four general members

Selection Process

The Executive Committee will work towards election of a new committee from its membership in 2027. This will mirror the process of election of the EBJIS Executive Committee. Applications shall be opened through the communication to ABJIN Members when calling the EBJIS General Assembly, not later than 6 weeks before the Annual Meeting. Applications shall be submitted no later than 1 week before the Annual Meeting. There shall be an ABJIN Annual Meeting, after the EBJIS General Assembly, to carry out an election.

Terms of Reference

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When Executive Committee's Members resign during their term of office, the Executive Committee may co-opt a new member, to serve for the remaining period. The vacated Executive Committee position will then be available to fill at the next Annual Meeting.

Role and Responsibilities of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall meet quarterly, upon invitation of the President or Secretary General. The meetings will be held online twice a year and in person twice a year- once at the EBJIS Annual Meeting and once at whichever event ABJIN is attending in Africa that year.

The Executive Committee is chaired by the President or, in case of an impediment, by the Vice-President.

The Executive Committee responsibilities are as follows:

- a) Reviewing and inputting into ABJIN activity and initiatives
- b) Deciding on the initiation of new working groups
- c) Leading working groups
- d) Approving ABJIN projects
- e) Conducting ABJIN ordinary business
- f) Provide strategic oversight to the network
- g) Encourage new membership
- h) Represent ABJIN externally
- i) Support reporting to EBJIS Executive Committee

The Executive Committee decisions are made by a simple majority of votes of the attending Members, as well by electronic means or/ and teleconference.

The Members of the Executive Committee shall not receive any remuneration from ABJIN or EBJIS.

Advisory Members to the Executive Committee

Advisory Members are co-opted by the Executive Committee for specific projects of ABJIN. The duration of their appointment is determined in each case by the Executive Committee.

Advisory Members may attend meetings and should be kept informed of the activity of the Executive Committee. They do not have voting rights on Committee decisions but may contribute to discussions and give advice on specific projects within their expertise.

Working groups

Working groups are the means by which ABJIN leads work to be carried out in fulfil ABJIN's objectives.

The current working groups are:

1. Education
2. FRI Guidelines
3. Database

These working groups may expand, or new groups added as the network grows.

Working Group Leads responsibilities are as follows:

- a) Provide strategic oversight of the work
- b) Meet regularly with working group members
- c) Report back to the ABJIN Executive Committee during quarterly meetings
- d) Recruit appropriate ABJIN members for the work
- e) Involve advisors and collaborators where necessary
- f) Ensure that work is achieved to targets
- g) Ensure that there is broad representation from across Africa for the work

Collaborations

We will collaborate wherever possible with other organisations doing similar work and ensure synergy of ideas and efficiency of resources.

ABJIN Executive Committee Members may propose new collaborations at any time, with review by the committee at the subsequent quarterly meeting.

Collaboration with EBJIS

In order to facilitate collaboration and good governance between the membership and Executive Committees of EBJIS and ABJIN the following measures will be in place:

- EBJIS leadership will have an open invitation to ABJIN events and will be informed of them in a timely manner.
- The ABJIN president, or their deputy, will be expected to attend the EBJIS annual general assembly.
- The ABJIN Executive Committee will report annually to the EBJIS Executive Committee, or when called upon.

Membership

Anyone with an interest in BJI, particularly in Africa, is welcome to apply to join the Network. Conditions of membership:

- Clinician in good standing.
- Particular interest in BJI in Africa and experience of working in a similar setting.

We will particularly support membership from clinicians based in Africa, all regions.

Membership is free.

To join the network, individuals are requested to complete an online form. Applications will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee.

The ABJIN Membership database will be maintained by the EBJIS secretariat.

Regular communication to the network shall occur through emails, social media posts and in person at the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting shall occur in person, and online, at the time of the EBJIS General Assembly.

Language and communication

All official ABJIN documents will be dual language in French and English.

All official ABJIN communication will be dual language in French and English.

All ABJIN social media posts will be dual language in French and English.

Website

The ABJIN webpages will be hosted on the EBJIS website but will have the ABJIN logo and branding.