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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## CONTEXT OF PRACTICE AND QUALITY OF PHYSICAL TRAINING AMONG SOCCER REFEREES IN BENIN

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### ABSTRACT

In Benin, the factors behind the low representation of international-level referees on the FIFA list (8%) are not known. The context of practice and the training followed by these referees would be potential factors. The study is of a cross-sectional type with participants, 42 referees aged 20 to 39 (including twenty-six of international level) who completed the questionnaire and 10 managers aged 32 to 74 interviewed. The majority of referees said that the *Practice Context* was *Unfavorable* to the production of a good performance (85.6%;  $p = 0.006$ ) but that the *Quality of training* was *Good* (64.3%;  $p = 0.07$ ). In addition to the management of communication and the managerial aspect which were assessed as *Favorable*, all the other sub-dimensions of the *Context of practice* were *Not favourable* to a good performance ( $\chi^2 = 0.09$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Leaders asserted that the practice context and the quality of physical training were not conducive to producing good performance. Among the two causes stated, the *Context of practice* seems more at the origin of the low representation of Beninese referees on the CAF and FIFA lists.

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## INTRODUCTION

More than a game, football has become over the years a multidimensional issue, a social, cultural, economic and political phenomenon (Mojahedi et al., 2014). A football match is characterized among the players by a succession of sprints, jumps, duels and decisive actions (Stolen et al., 2005; Stroyer et al., 2004; Deutsch et al., 1998). It is these cleverly directed actions that actually constitute the show, the latter only having meaning and being pleasant when it is well animated by the referees (Sayfollahpour et al., 2013; Aoba et al., 2011). However, refereeing has always raised controversy in team sports (Mirjamali et al., 2012). The challenge for referees has always been to achieve a balance between the application of the laws of the game and the context or the spirit of the game, in order to satisfy the expectations of players, coaches and supporters. The importance of referees in soccer competitions is well established (Weston et al., 2011; Mascarenhas et al., 2009). This function imposes a minimum of physical and psychological qualities necessary for the efficient management of matches (Attikpa et al., 2015; Aoba et al., 2011). Since 1962, when the Beninese Football Federation

remained unremarkable. As a consequence, the aspects related to arbitration are not developed either. For more than a decade, the national championship was heavily disrupted. In fact, the referees were demotivated because there was little demand for them. They do not benefit from medical supervision, health care, or any form of coverage, as is the case in developed countries. Moreover, for professional reasons, the latter train only once and for the most advanced, two to three times a week, which seems very insufficient to reach the level of physical performance required (Galanti et al., 2008). Few studies have focused on the *practice context* of football referees. One of the few studies available on the issue (Le Tiec, 2015) indicated that the authorities in charge of arbitration would not be willing to grant arbitrators their autonomy. They would prefer to put up with the many early career abandonments, rather than considering dialogue with a structured refereeing body, which practices in an environment favourable to high performance and claiming a certain autonomy. For several years, researchers have been interested in the decision-making process of referees, particularly in football (Sayfollahpour, 2013; Dosseville and Garnarczyk, 2007). Most agree that, for the achievement of a good performance by soccer referees,

(Sayfollahpour, 2013; Weston *et al.*, 2012; Castagna *et al.*, 2007). Several studies have been devoted to these physical and physiological demands during football matches for both players (Mallo *et al.*, 2012) and referees (Helsen *et al.*, 2004) certainly because of its great importance. Studies carried out on the conditions of practice, methods and strategies aimed at improving the performance of referees are rather rare (Mojahedi *et al.*, 2014). Those undertaken in Africa and in Benin in particular on the issue were limited either to the purely sociopsychological aspects associated with violence in the stadiums (Attikpa *et al.*, 2015), or to questions of stress and ritual practices in football (Tanimomo *et al.*, 2006). In Benin, the challenge seems greater since very few referees have evolved at the international level. In the history of football, only one Beninese was able to participate twice in the World Cup; these are the 2002 and 2006 World Cups. What are the causes? We did not find any scientific publication whose objective was to assess the *practice context* of Beninese referees as well as the *quality of their physical training* to partly explain the fact that they represent only 8% of the official workforce, FIFA level. This study was therefore undertaken with the following two objectives: 1) to analyze the context of the practice of football referees in Benin; 2) appreciate in these same referees, the quality of the physical training followed.

**Literature Review and Conceptual Framework:** In the literature, the different models of sports performance proposed to take into account whether human or sports performance in general, or socio-economic factors determining all sports results at the level of nations (Nouatin *et al.*, 2015). Unable to obtain a theoretical model specific to football referees (Mojahedi *et al.*, 2014), we felt it necessary to build one (Figure 1), in order to highlight the determining factors of their performance during matches. Based on existing models (Mojahedi *et al.*, 2014; Sayfollahpour, 2013), our model consists of factors grouped into four levels:

1) the biological factors and the state of health of the referee. Referring to the requirements, it seems necessary for the performance of the referees to perform well: to have excellent biological factors (a good distribution of muscle fibers, good ventilatory capacity, to have a good proportion of fat mass and lean and with high blood lactate tolerance) and good health (cardiac profile, hemoglobin status); to develop and strengthen physical qualities such as maximum oxygen consumption through the work of maximum aerobic power, speed running, repeated sprinting skills and motor coordination. Anthropometric characteristics and physical abilities determine the type of activity of the athlete (Silva *et al.*, 2013; Barbieri *et al.*, 2012).

2) the technical skills that reflect the mastery of the rules of the game, as well as their correct application. The referee must interpret the laws of the game in a fair and firm way in order to allow the spectacle. It rigorously follows the game to provide knowledge of the laws of the game as it unfolds (Helsen and Bulting, 2004). The challenge has always been to achieve an osmosis between the application of the laws of the game, the different physical and mental qualities essential to referees in order to meet the expectations of players, coaches and supporters;

3) levels of education and seniority, supports of experience (Sayfollahpour, 2013). In a study carried out on the sources of stress among referees at national and international level, the results indicated that instruction and technical abilities are factors that promote performance (Mirjamali *et al.*, 2012);

4) physical abilities (Weston *et al.*, 2012; Di Salvo *et al.*, 2012): various authors have indicated that physical abilities are the most important factors in the performance of football referees (Barbero-Alvarez *et al.*, 2012; Weston *et al.*, 2011). They highlighted the high level of physical and physiological demands of football matches on referees. Indeed, the latter regularly travel distances greater than or equal to those of the players, that is to say between 11 km and 13 km (Aola *et al.*, 2013). During a match, an average of 1.6 km to 2.3 km are travelled at high intensity (Weston *et al.*, 2012; Da Silva *et al.*, 2003) and these efforts induce a significant cardiovascular load (Weston *et al.*, 2012; Castagna *et al.*, 2007). The average heart rate for players often fluctuates between 70 and 85% of maximum heart

85-90% of maximum heart rate (HRmax) was often recorded (Weston *et al.*, 2012; Castagna *et al.*, 2007).

The context in which these referees operate (recruitment, training, strategic and financial management, career and function structures), as well as the quality of their training (planning, structuring and content of training sessions) come to reinforce this first part. The following factors are also important for referees because, on their own, they can affect their performance. These are psychoaffective factors, relational context, physical and environmental factors. Psychoaffective factors refer to stress management, quality and duration of sleep. As for the relational context, it takes into account the relations between the referees, then that established with the media and the various actors, the age difference between players and referees, the type of supporters, the distance between the spectators and the referee, the attitude of spectators (Attikpa *et al.*, 2015; Sayfollahpour, 2013). Finally, physical and environmental factors include climate (ambient temperature, relative humidity), altitude, diet and nutritional profile (Taylor *et al.*, 2014). Faced with these requirements, it seems necessary, for the achievement of a good performance of the referees, that they have or develop at an optimal level, each of the capacities identified, while granting an important place to the technical and relational factors.

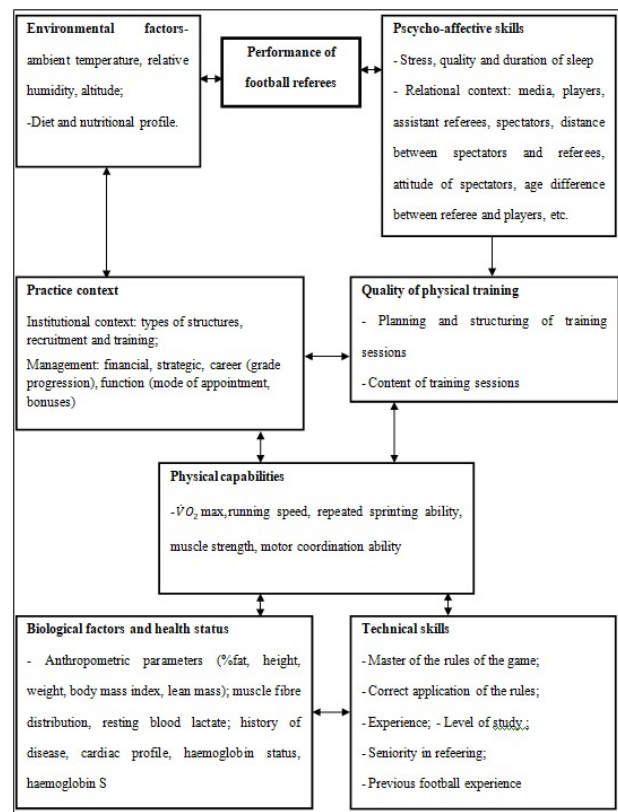


Figure 1. Proposed conceptual model of the determinants of football referees performance

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This is a cross-sectional study, carried out in the form of a survey by questionnaire and by interview in the two major cities of Benin, namely Porto-Novo and Cotonou. The questionnaire was self-administered at the referees in their usual theoretical classroom in the presence of the main researcher who collected the sheets just before the start of the day's session. For those who were not present, we took over the administration of the questionnaire the following session under the same conditions. Two weeks before the actual survey, we carried out the pre-test in order to check the sensitivity of the questionnaire. Six referees, including five of international level and a

the north, were selected for this pre-test, which made it possible to correct three questions. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using a statistical test. One week after the test, we resumed administering the questionnaire (retest) to 14 referees chosen from the batch of the first test, in order to assess its internal reliability, i.e. the consistency of the responses in the time. At the end of this exercise, an interview guide was drawn up for physical instructors and members of the central commission of referees (CCA) for football in Benin. This guide consisted of an introductory introduction, the specific objective targeted, the dimensions to be explored and a three-column table. The first column was intended for the problematic elements, the second for the 10 main questions and the last reserved for follow-up questions, also 10 in number. 'Oueme (CRA/Oueme). The data collected during the surveys (questionnaire and interview) remained anonymous, confidential and were used exclusively to achieve the objectives of this study. The written informed consent of each referee, managers and physical instructors was respectively obtained before the distribution of the questionnaire and the individual interviews.

**Attendees:** The target population is that of football players, particularly referees, physical instructors and CCA leaders, men and women residing in Benin. The study sample was constituted by the non-random method and the exhaustive technique, so that we recruited all the referees who satisfied the following inclusion criteria: being a FIFA, CAF, federal referee, trainees, male or female, registered on the list of one of the two regional commissions of referees in the south-littoral and south-east of Benin; be active, that is to say to be regularly scheduled to lead official matches, then participate diligently in theoretical courses and physical training sessions in Cotonou or Porto-Novo for at least three sports seasons. A total of 42 referees aged 20 to 39 (37 men and 5 women), affiliated with the Beninese Football Federation (twenty-six referees were at international level and 16 at national level) and 10 managers aged between 32 and 74 (7 CCA leaders and 3 physical instructors) participated in this study.

**Data collection tool:** The study was conducted using a questionnaire and interview guide. The questionnaire consisted of three parts that each participant had to complete. The first, which contained 13 questions, was reserved for the identification of referees and their socio-demographic characteristics. The second part, consisting of 41 questions grouped into eight sub-dimensions, made it possible to assess the *context* of the referees' practice. The third, comprising 18 questions grouped into three sub-dimensions, concerned the *quality of the physical training* followed by the referees. The interview guide comprised 10 main questions and 10 follow-up questions which reflected four sub-dimensions. The first was reserved for the identification of the interviewees and their anthropometric characteristics and sports history. The second part, which reports on the representativeness of referees at the international level, consisted of two main questions and two follow-up questions. The third part was also composed of two main questions and two follow-up questions but reflects the representation of the leaders on the context of the practice of Beninese football referees. The last part consisted of six main questions and six follow-ups indicated the representation of the interviewees on the quality of the physical training of these referees.

### Variables Studied

**Conceptual and operational aspects of the questionnaire and interview guide:** Two composite variables were used for this study: the Referees' Practice Context (RPC) and the Quality of Referees' Physical Training (QPTR). The RPC resulted from the combination of eight sub-dimensions: a) legal and institutional aspects; b) managerial aspect; c) socio-sanitary aspect; d) training structures; e) career management; f) management of material and financial resources; g) communication management; h) match management and planning of training sessions. Taking into account all of these aspects should make it possible to appreciate the context in which the arbitrators of Benin perform their duties. The QPTR variable was

constituted with three sub-dimensions, namely: a) the training strategy; b) content of training sessions; c) the quality of the technical supervision. The use of these aspects aims to account for the quality of the physical training followed by the football referees surveyed.

For each sub-dimension used in the assessment of a composite variable, the maximum assignable score was determined by adding all the points assigned to the questions that make it up. This made it possible to calculate the scores corresponding to each of the two modes of assessment of the sub-dimension. The RPC was considered *Favorable* for the production of good performance and the QPTR *Good*, if the score achieved is greater than or equal to 60% of the maximum score attributable. On the other hand, the RPC was *Unfavorable* and the QPTR *Poor* when the calculated score was less than 60% of the maximum attributable (Varkevissier *et al.*, 1991). To calculate the scores, we assigned the minimum (1 point) to the wrong answer, successively increasing one point to the answers until the best. The highest point was therefore assigned to the level considered to be the best, so that the maximum score that can be assigned to a sub-dimension was calculated by adding the maximum ratings of the questions that make it up.

**Functional classification:** The independent variable relates to the status of the arbitrators with two modalities. The two modalities are international level referee (NI) and national level referee (NN). The *Context of the practice* of the referees of Benin which is whether *Favourable or Not Favourable* to the production of a good performance and the *Quality of the physical training* of the referees whose modalities were either *Good or Bad* were considered as dependent variables.

**Statistical analysis:** The survey data was processed with SPSS software (Version 21). The descriptive results are presented in the form of means (m) or absolute frequencies, accompanied by the corresponding percentages. The test of  $\chi^2$ , followed by Cramer's V in case of a significant test, was used to compare the proportions with each other. SPSS software (Version 10.0) was used for the comparison between correct and incorrect answers. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was calculated to assess the internal consistency of questions relating to the same variable. A value of the coefficient  $\alpha \geq 0.7$  was considered satisfactory to establish the validity of the questionnaire. Bravais Pearson's r coefficient was calculated to determine the relationships between the odds reached by the referees on the test and on the retest. The level of significance of the statistical tests and of the correlation coefficient r was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

In total, 42 arbitrators aged on average  $27.2 \pm 0.7$  years [20 to 39 years] and 10 managers aged on average  $52.3 \pm 13.7$  years [32 to 74 years] (7 CCA managers and 3 physical instructors) participated in the study. The Cronbach coefficients calculated to assess the internal consistency of the different parts of the questionnaire were respectively  $\alpha_1 = 0.72$  and  $\alpha_2 = 0.85$  for the RPC, as well as for the QPTR. The Bravais Pearson correlation was perfect ( $r = 1$ ) for both RPC and QPTR. Among the interviewees, only one had been a player in a Division 1 team, two played in the 2nd Division and the other seven had stopped at school level. Five had a higher level, four reached the secondary level and only one was at the primary level. In the group of managers, four were regularly admitted to retirement in refereeing, four had stopped for bad treatment of referees, one had to suspend for professional reasons and the youngest among those interviewed is still active.

**Representativeness of Beninese referees in major international competitions:** The interviewees affirmed that the number of referees of international level is sufficient but, recall that *this number was imposed by FIFA according to the level of Beninese football*. According to them, a quota would be set for each sporting nation by FIFA which takes into account a certain number of criteria. Three interviewees out of 10 nevertheless maintain that this number is insufficient, especially "*if the referees of international level should on*

their own lead the matches of the Division 1 championship". They argue that it is through "lack of real-time communication and lack of training" that the CCA is reduced to this number of international-level referees. On the whole, the interviewees agreed on the fact that the lack of competition remains and remains the main obstacle to progress in their career as an elite referee.

**Context of practice and quality of training:** Considering the referees, all statuses combined (Table 1), 85.6% of the referees questioned considered that the RPC is *Not Favourable* to the production of a good performance, whereas with regard to the QPTR, 64.4 % of referees (Table 1) consider it to be *Good*.

**Table 1. Appreciation of the context of practice and the quality of physical training of referees, according to status (n = 42)**

		Effective (%)	p	Effective (%)	p	$\chi^2$	p	dof
RPC	Statutes	Not favourable	0.17	Favourable	1	0.42	0.41	1
	National	13 (30.9)		3 (7.1)				
	International	23 (54.8)		3 (7.1)				
QPTR	Statutes	Bad	0.73	Good	0.37	0.03	0.55	1
	National	6 (14.3)		10 (23.8)				
	International	9 (21.4)		17 (40.5)				

RPC: practice context of arbitrators; QPTR: quality of physical training for referees; National: federal or league level umpire; International: international-level referees from the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the International Federation of Amateur Football (FIFA); dof: degree of freedom.

#### Assessment of the sub-dimensions of the composite variables *Context of practice* and *Quality of the physical training of referees*

**Table 2. Assessment of the sub-dimensions of the composite variables *Practice context* and *Quality of physical training* (n = 42)**

	Workforce (%)	Workforce (%)	p
Context of practice of arbitrators	Favourable	Notfavourable	
- JI aspect	11 (26.2)	31 (73.8)	0.009
- Managerial aspect	29 (69.0)	13 (31.0)	0.02
- Training structure	26 (61.9)	16 (38.1)	0.15
- Sanitary aspect	6 (14.3)	36 (85.7)	0.0006
- Career management	11 (26.2)	31 (73.8)	0.009
- FMR management	10 (23.8)	32 (76.2)	0.004
- Communication management	30 (71.4)	12 (28.6)	0.01
- MPS management	9 (21.4)	33 (78.6)	0.002
Quality of referee training	Good	Bad	
- Training strategy	17 (40.5)	25 (59.5)	0.23
- Content of the sessions	25 (59.5)	17 (40.5)	0.23
- Quality of supervision	35 (83.3)	7 (16.7)	0.0009

RPC: practice context of arbitrators; QPTR: quality of physical training for referees; JI aspect: legal and institutional aspect; RFM management: management of financial and material resources; MPS management: match management and session planning. The p-value shown represents the statistical significance of the percentage differences between the response categories.

**Representation of refereeing leaders on the practice context and the quality of physical training of Beninese referees:** The interviewees who represent the ruling class incriminate the various conflicts that shook the Beninese Football Federation (FBF) much more. They also mention the *poor organization of the various sporting events and denounce the derisory match bonuses, bordering on the offensive, granted to the referees*. These leaders confess that *there is no longer a sporting nation that pays such ridiculous match bonuses to football referees*. These leaders are aware of the fact that arbitration in Benin does not feed its man. These difficult conditions do not favour the multiplication of training sessions since in the end you have to eat well. They also hope that, in the absence of professionalization of the sector, semi-professionalization would make an acceptable contribution to improving the physical capacities and consequently the performance of referees in situ. According to the interviewees, *the training sessions are insufficient and poorly supervised*. Almost all, nine out of 10 interviewees, declare that the practice environment is not favourable but that the physical instructors are competent. Two interviewees out of 10 believe that *the physical supervision is not entrusted to specialists but rather mostly to former referees who do not necessarily have the right physiological information to contribute to the improvement of the physical qualities of referees of different levels*.

## DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to assess the *context of practice* and the *quality of physical training* of football referees in southern Benin. The analysis of the various results indicates that the referees questioned

within the framework of this study appreciate their context of practice as *Not favourable* to the achievement of good performances but, consider that the quality of the physical training which is proposed to them is good.

**Methodological approach and reliability of results:** This is a cross-sectional study and the data collection tools used are a self-administered questionnaire by football referees of different levels and individual interviews with CCA leaders and physical instructors of the soccer referees. For convenience, they have been divided into two levels: international and national, each one comprising central referees and assistants.

Although the sample is non-random, the different levels and categories of referees in southern Benin are represented as well as their leaders at various levels in this survey group. The conclusions drawn from the data of this survey cannot be generalized, that is to say reported to the whole country, even if the data can be considered as reflecting the reality of arbitration in Benin. They remain valid only for the referees of the south of Benin.

**Practice context of football referees:** During a football match, the different actors experience the event differently. While some are jubilant, some are unhappy or depressed and others are indifferent to the outcome of the game. This last fringe of football players is under enormous pressure which is at the origin of a state of anxiety (Mirjamali et al., 2012). They are almost always extremely stressed before, during and after the game and are the target of various aggression (Attikpa et al., 2015; Sayfollahpour, 2013). The various factors causing stress are often external and greatly disrupt the performance of referees. Considering the results obtained in this study, pressure would not be the only factor involved. The daily living conditions, the quality of training, the lack of professionalism and health care of these referees, to name a few, seem to be the most incriminated. The analysis of the data reveals that for more than 60% of the referees questioned, the *Context of practice* is *Not favourable* to the achievement of good performances. This assessment of the context of practice is based on that of the sub-dimensions of legal, institutional and health aspects, career management, financial and material resources, match planning and physical training sessions for football referees. Regarding training structures, we note that none exist in Benin. The only training that football referees receive are

those organized annually by FIFA for the renewal of the list of referees at international level and weekly by the Central Arbitration Committee (CCA). The good performance of the referee does not depend exclusively on his physical capacities but also on his psychological state, the reaction of the players, the coaches and the attitude of the spectators (Sayfollahpour *et al.*, 2013). Indeed, the quality of referees and coaching staff improves when professional conditions such as career management, human resources, legal, institutional and health aspects, to name a few, are established (Aoba *et al.*, 2011). Thus, the athlete and in particular the referee no longer constantly thinks about his basic problems insofar as they are taken into account by the professional contract: his career is assured, his health is rigorously monitored and administrative hassles are now taken care of by leaders. It is the absence of the conditions mentioned above which represents the daily reality of football referees in the Beninese context, which makes it *Not Favourable* to the production of a good performance in these referees.

Leaders at various levels of officiating agree. They admit that the bonuses that the referees receive after their services are derisory and do not provide good motivation. They insist on the fact that these referees are not insured and when at the end of the match they are attacked are often abandoned to their fate. These leaders of the CCA recognize that arbitration in Benin does not feed its man. The interviewees also blame the crisis that shook the Beninese Football Federation (FBF). According to these officials, the poor organization of the governing bodies and the disagreement that persisted within the FBF for more than a decade made the context of practice more difficult, which was not already favourable. This situation was the basis for the suspension of the national championship and various tournaments which allowed football referees at both national and international level to practice regularly in order to be more competitive in CAF and FIFA matches. Almost unanimously, these interviewees considered that the resolution of the crisis or the start of the championship could contribute to improving the current quality of the services provided by football referees.

**Quality of physical training for referees:** All studies agree on the fact that physical capacity is a guarantee of safety for referees. Out of three sub-dimensions included in the *Quality of physical training variable*, only one is *Favorable* to good performance. This is the quality of supervision (83.3% versus 16.7%). In this study, management alludes to the qualification of the physical trainer. On the other hand, the two other sub-dimensions *strategy* used and *content of the training sessions* which take more account of the *Quality dimension of the training* were *Not favourable* to the achievement of good performance. For referees, the training strategy used is not conducive to producing a good performance. On the other hand, they affirm that the quality of the supervision is good. While for the leaders, the training sessions are insufficient, poorly supervised and the framework of practice inadequate to the production of good performance. However, they claim that the physical instructors are competent and work on all physical qualities during training sessions. A priori, the physical instructors have the skills but are not motivated because of the conditions and the framework of practice which are almost unfavourable. In the absence of competitions in a conflict environment where the effort is badly remunerated, it is understandable that the training sessions are not prepared in advance. This may explain the poor supervision despite the proven competence of the physical instructors. These Beninese referees who under these conditions remain on the official FIFA list are very often civil servants for whom the various bonuses do not represent much, that is to say that they do not wait for arbitration to meet their needs. They have a passion for refereeing and find their motivations elsewhere, such as travelling, appearing on television or even becoming famous.

Indeed, the spectacle offered by football and the beauty of the gestures of the actors, are only possible thanks to the presence of a referee on the playing area, the very one who must enforce the rules or the laws on the field game. In order to play this role properly, he must be physically, technically and psychologically balanced (d'Oliveira *et al.*, 2011). An average of three to four weekly training

sessions with an intensity frequently exceeding 80% of the  $\dot{V}O_2\text{max}$  would be recommended for good physical preparation of football referees (Galanti *et al.*, 2008). Regular training and psychological monitoring should be given to Beninese referees in general and those of football in particular. Some studies have shown that apart from systematized training sessions, any athlete for the development of his career organizes personal or individual training sessions. These are deliberate workouts that would further develop physical skills (Carton and Fruchart, 2014). During our investigation, the football referees questioned admitted that they no longer worked regularly since there was no longer any immediate stake. Indeed, since 2010, the date of the first crisis in the world of Beninese football, the atmosphere of football activities has become embarrassing, suspicious and distrustful; thus breaking any motivation of these referees. To this is added the mismanagement of finances which forced the government to discredit the FBF by withdrawing its approval at the beginning of 2015. Consequently, the various championships were suspended and the football referees did not be more in demand. This last decision ended up destroying the little motivation they still had. This is the place to underline that the realization of this survey encountered some difficulties due to the lack of availability of the referees of the study.

## CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to analyze the *context of practice* and the *quality of physical training* of football referees in southern Benin. In the current context, the various results showed that more than six referees out of 10 affirmed that the context of practice is *Not Favourable* to the production of a good performance and the strategies are *Not Favourable* for the production of a good performance. The interview survey reinforces this result and completes that the absence of a health insurance contract and the derisory premiums do not guarantee Beninese football referees a fulfilling professional career. As for the quality of the physical training, it appears that it is the consequence of the context of practice *Not favourable* since the referee must feel confident before indulging in multiple training sessions, a guarantee of his physical safety. The absence of a national championship in Benin or any form of competition is also, according to the interviewees, one of the causes for which the quality of physical training is not good. We can therefore think that the difficulties related to the exercise of arbitration in Benin are much more organizational and managerial.

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