



World Health Organization

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## WHO Collaborates to brief AAU Medical Personnel about the new flu

The Addis Ababa University (AAU) Faculty of Medicine in collaboration with World Health (WHO), Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute (EHNRI), and Ethiopian Medical Association conducted a half day seminar to its students and staff on the Pandemic Influenza A H1N1 on 20 July 2009. Dr. Milliard xxxxx, the Academic Din of the AAU Medical School, informed the participants that the program was developed in a bid to raise awareness about the new influenza among health personnel regarding what it is, how it transmits, as well as how it gets treated among others.

as there is currently, insufficient data to precisely determine who is at higher risk for complications of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection. Similarly, people with Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus); Immunosuppressant, including that caused by medications or by HIV; Pregnant women; Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long term aspirin therapy; are also considered as highly susceptible to influenza A (H1N1) virus infection.



"I thank WHO, EHNRI, and Ethiopian Medical association for organizing such important briefing" said Dr. Milliard in his welcome remarks. According to him, such experience sharing when such novel cases happen not only enhances the medical service delivery, but also capacitates of the concerned personnel.

Dr. Admass underscored that such flu is not new to the world. "Three pandemics occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the interval of 10-39 years: Spanish Flu(1918-20); Asian Flu (1957-58); Hong Kong Flu (1968-69) each of which claimed 40; 2; and 1 millions respectively".

Dr. Admass Teferra, WHO National Professional Officer, reminded the participants that Influenza A (H1N1) virus causes seasonal influenza in many countries in the world. According to her, Influenza A virus is estimated to affect 5-15% of the global population that results in severe illness in 3-5 million people and causing 250, 000 – 500,000 deaths worldwide.

It is to be recalled that the Spanish flu – locally known as the *Hedar Beshita* – has claimed the life of many in Ethiopia. Richard Pankhurst in his book '*An Introduction to the medical history of Ethiopia*' (1990) mentions Alaqa Kinfe as saying "Many people were dying in AA. Just as a brother would walk over the corpse of his brother on a battlefield so nobody troubled to bury the dead by the road side. They simply walked by..."

The panelist, Dr. Admass Tefera, D ..... , Dr. Goitom Gebreyesus, and Dr. Teshale Seboxa underscored that children younger than 2 years and Adults older than 60 years are reportedly at higher risk for seasonal influenza complications are considered at higher risk for novel influenza A (H1N1) complications

As of July 27, 2009, 10H00 GMT, 134503 people have officially been reported globally to have contracted the influenza A (H1N1) virus, when 816 people's lost their life from complications the virus caused. In Ethiopia a national taskforce is established to closely look into the matter.



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### WHO Reaffirms its Commitment to Closely Work with EPA

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The WHO Representative in Ethiopia, Dr. Fatoumata Nafou -Traoré, told the Ethiopian Pediatric Society (EPS) in its 11<sup>th</sup> annual conference that took place on 24 July 09 here in Addis Ababa under the theme *Nutrition for Child Health* that Professional Societies such as EPS are always of a paramount importance in the development endeavor to reducing maternal and child mortality and morbidity through policy dialogue, advocacy, and promotion of best practices, among others. “Thus,” Dr. Fatoumata said, “WHO recognizes EPS’s effort and further calls on the society to maintain its leading and catalytic role in advocating and advising favorable policies and strategies to children in Ethiopia and beyond”.

In his opening remarks, the Ethiopian Federal Minister of Health Dr. Tedros Adhanom represented by \_\_\_\_\_, pointed out that his government realizes that nutrition is important for the health and survival of mother and children. According to Dr. Tedros “Under nutrition contribute 53% of under five mortality that remained high at 123/1000 life breath.” “Having realized the magnitude and seriousness of nutrition associated problem the government has launched national nutrition strategy and program, universal salt iodization and endorsement of zinc as a modality diarrhea treatment and prevention are among the important major steps the government took over a year to reverse situation,” he added.

Malnutrition is a major cause of child morbidity and mortality in Ethiopia. About 60% of all deaths in children have malnutrition as the underlying cause. A child with malnutrition has a higher risk of many types of diseases and death. Even children with mild and moderate malnutrition have an increased risk of death. At the same time, obesity and other nutrition-related chronic diseases are becoming a serious problem, even in low income countries. More than one billion adults worldwide are overweight, of whom 300

million are obese. These issues are often rooted in poverty and co-exist in communities, some in the same households. While undernutrition kills in early life, it also leads to a high risk of chronic diseases and death later in life. This is the double burden of malnutrition, with common causes.

Dr. Tedros congratulated EPS for bringing up this important national issue as a theme of its 11<sup>th</sup> conference. “The FMOH will be with you and will provide all the necessary support in all your efforts for child health and well being,” he added. Dr. Fatoumata on her part commended the efforts and contributions of the society. “I also like to take this opportunity to re-affirm the commitment of WHO to support your endeavors. I have no doubt that you will remain committed to contribute immensely for the betterment of the healthy growth and development of Ethiopian children,” she said.



On the occasion EPS honored Dr. Teklestion as the pediatrician of the year. Dr. Teklestion, 74 years of age, is one of the veteran pediatricians and is the founder of Jimma Health Science College.