HEALTH CARE IN SOMALILAND

By

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During

LINKS MEETING

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My country became part of the British Empire in 1884 as 'British Somaliland Protectorate'. After 76 years, we achieved a negotiated Independence from Britain on 26th June 1960 and became the first Independent and Sovereign Somali State. One week later, former Italian Somalia also became Independent and the two Somali countries voluntarily united on the 1st of July, 1960.
Edna Adan Ismail when a second-year student Nurse at the West London Hospital in 1959

Edna Adan Ismail, left, as a second year student nurse in 1959 at the West London Hospital, United Kingdom
Edna Adan, First Lady of Somalia, being hosted by Chancellor Kissing of West Germany, 1968
Prime Minister Egal (Edna's first husband) and Edna being received by President Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House in 1968.
Prime Minister Egal and First Lady Edna being hosted by President Johnson and First Lady of USA, 1968
A ten-year civil war from 1982 to 1991, destroyed 95% of Somaliland’s cities as well as hospitals, schools, public facilities, and caused the death of a quarter million of our people.
The war also caused over a million of our people to flee the country and seek shelter wherever they could find refuge and many are alive today because you sheltered them when they landed on your shores.
At present, the population of Somaliland is about 3 and a half million who occupy 137,600 square km with 850 Kms of coastline.

The capital city is Hargeisa with an estimated population of 800,000. It should be noted that in June 1991 after civilians returned to Somaliland after the civil war, the population of Hargeisa was less than 15,000.

55% of our people are nomads or livestock herders and 45% are urban or peri-urban dwellers, among them are recent refugees from neighbouring Somalia and a few from Ethiopia.

When the rains fail, there is always an influx of people who have lost their animals to the cities in search of food or employment.
The health of the people of Somaliland is among the worst in Africa. According to UNICEF (1990 report), the Maternal Mortality Rate for Somali women is 160 per 10,000 live births making this the third highest in the world.

Infant and Child Mortality rates are also among the highest.
The country has 12 hospitals with a total capacity of 1586 beds and 69 Mother and Child Health Services (MCH).

There are also 1042 beds for TB patients.

Somaliland has 75 doctors; 66 midwives; 404 nurses and 228 auxiliary staff. **Most of them work in Urban hospitals and a few in District health services. No medical services available for nomads beyond Primary Care.**

There are also 7 private hospitals with a total of 142 beds, one of them being the Edna Adan Hospital with 55 beds.

Only 10% of women are assisted by trained health professionals and the rest are delivered by relatives or poorly trained traditional birth attendants (TBAs).

FGM affects 98% of our women and adds to the complications that women have during childbirth.
The worst killers of children are acute respiratory infections, Gastro Enteritis, Malnutrition.

Immunization coverage of children is around 60%.

In women, Eclampsia is the biggest killer of pregnant women.

Most pregnant women are attended by non-trained midwives with resulting complications from inability to efficiently manage the progress of labour/delivery as well as puerperal infections.
Training of Health Workers

Nurses
1. The Edna Adan Nurse Training School was opened in 1999 and has graduated two groups with third group in training.
2. The Government Institute of Health Sciences started training nurses in 2003 and graduated two groups.
3. The Burao Nurse training School opened in 2004 and graduated first group in last week.
4. The Borama School of Nursing was opened in 2007.

Midwives
1. The Edna Adan Hospital is currently the only midwifery training school and has graduated two groups so far with a third group of community midwives currently in training.
Medical Schools

1. University of Amoud started training doctors in 1999 and graduated first group of five doctors in 2007

2. Hargeisa University started training doctors in 2003

No Post-Graduate Training for doctors available at present

Laboratory Technicians

1. The first group of Laboratory Technicians were trained at Edna Hospital in 2002 and second group graduated in 2007

Currently there are no training opportunities available for training XRay Technicians or Pharmacists
The Edna Adan Hospital
Hargeisa, Somaliland
Opened in March 2002
Between 9 March 2002 and 30\textsuperscript{st} May, 2008, the hospital has achieved the following:

- Delivered 7494 women who had a total of 7621 babies
- 6568 of them had normal vaginal deliveries
- 659 were delivered by Caesarean section
- 26 had Forceps deliveries
- 368 were delivered by Vacuum extraction
- 6976 babies were born alive
- 502 had died in-utero and were delivered macerated
- 143 were neonatal deaths
- 32 were maternal deaths. Our (MMR) in six and a half years is 42.7/10,000 Live Births (The National MMR is 160/10,000)
- 6686 patients were admitted and treated in the General Wards
- 51603 patients attended the out-patients clinics
- 89,379 Laboratory tests were performed
Most patients are emergencies or complicated cases whose problem had either been diagnosed during outpatient consultation; referred by another health facility; or brought to hospital by relatives.

Some cases were brought from other towns or regions of Somaliland, or from neighbouring Somalia or Ethiopia.
A Total of 57 women with Vessico-Vaginal Fistula were successfully repaired
A Total of 174 Children and Adults had a repair for Cleft-Lip or Cleft Palate
Training Department:

- 30 General Nurses graduated in 2003 and
- 29 General Nurses graduated in 2008
Training Department:

- 24 Post-Basic Midwives graduated in 2004 and 18 Post-Basic Midwives graduated in 2007
Training Department: Current students

- 46 students nurses started training in General Nursing in January 2007:
  - 12 students are boys
  - 34 students are girls
Training Department: Continued

- 21 Students from the Regions of Awdal, Sahil, Togdheer, Sool and Sanaag started a Residential 18-month training in December 2007 to become Community Midwives in their Regions (Funded by UNFPA)
A Total of 66 Midwives working in Government Hospitals throughout Somaliland (and a few from Somalia) were given 14 days Refresher Training in Obstetrical Life Saving Skills.

A Total of 70 Traditional Birth Attendants were trained for 10 days at a time.

A Total of 43 Midwives, Nurses and Auxiliaries were trained in Exclusive Breast-feeding.
Training of Laboratory Technicians

14 Laboratory Technicians were trained in 2002 (Funded by ICD) and 16 Laboratory Technicians were trained in 2007 (Funded by World Vision)
Health Officer Training Course

7 Health Officers are now in training:

- 4 are women, 2 of them being nurses with Post-Basic Midwifery
- 3 are men with general Nursing Training

The course is for 18 months.

( Funded by THET )
A Total of 143 School Teachers from Hargeisa Region were given a 10-Day Training in Basic First Aid

(Funded by THET)

A Total of 147 students were given Basic Computer Literacy Courses
Staff of Hospital:

- A total of 88 staff work in hospital, among them are:
  - Two Resident Doctors
  - Three Part-Time Doctors
  - Four full-time Teachers in Training Department supported by Guest Lecturers as needed
  - 24 Nursing and Midwifery staff work in hospital and provide clinical supervision for trainees
Achievements and Benefits of hospital to the community:

- A national Referral Hospital for obstetric and Medical Emergencies
- Availability of Resident Medical expertise to respond to emergencies on a 24/hour basis
- Reduction of Maternal Mortality Rate to ¼ of national average
- Availability of a Blood Bank
- Fully trained, highly motivated and competent nursing, midwifery, and Laboratory staff
- Reasonably equipped hospital with basic life-saving equipment
- VCT Clinic supported by UNICEF and Handicap International
- Cost of treatment and operations is competitive and based on not-for-profit policy of hospital, verified by Board of Trustees
Indirect achievements

- Setting high standards for patient care
- Improved International cooperation promoting links with hospitals in Europe and the USA
- Employment opportunity for 88 employees and improved income for their families thus contributing to poverty reduction initiatives in Somaliland
- Empowering women to take Leadership positions and responsibilities
- Conducting study on harmful Traditional Practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and fighting practice (Study funded by Norwegian People’s Aid)
Challenges

- Insufficient salary support for staff
- High cost of water, electricity, fuel and food for staff and patients
- High cost of consumables (gloves, syringes, dressings, catheters etc.)
- Hospital has to generate own running cost and cost of training since student fees are kept at $10/month with some students being trained for free
- Shortfalls covered by my pension and from rents collected from rented out premises on hospital grounds.
Lessons Learnt

- With determination, anything is possible!
Needs from Somalilanders in the Diaspora

- Remember that your country needs your support and the benefit of the skills and knowledge that you have now acquired. Don’t wait for others to help your people before you yourself have made the effort to make a contribution.
- Be proud of who you are be a good role-model for the youth.

Needs from Wales Links

- Training/support for staff of departments of administration in major hospitals
- Salary Subsidy for Teachers
- Qualified Nurse Tutors to support Training Department on a full-time basis to train tutors and help us start Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) at Edna Adan Hospital and in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Hargeisa University.
- Scholarship for top student graduates
- Supply of consumables
- Regular/constant supply of water for the hospital
- Regular supply of Textbooks
- Replacement of old hospital computers
- Setting-up of XRay Department and improvement of existing Laboratory department
- Setting-up of Dental Department and training of dental technicians
- Training of Pharmacists
- Post-Basic training for graduated nurses in Paediatrics, Mental Health and Community Health/Public Health
- Extension of Operation Theatre and training of staff
- Linkage with Nursing and Midwifery Schools in Wales