

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

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HHR | HARARGHE
HEALTH
RESEARCH



CHAMPS

Building
Knowledge.
Saving
Children's
Lives.



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MEDICINE



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Address

Haramaya University

Collage of Health and Medical Sciences

www.haramaya.edu.et

<https://champshealth.org>

Harar, Ethiopia

Prepared by: Mariamcher Ayalew

Working in the COMMUNITY

CHAMPS Ethiopia SBS (Social and Behavioral Science team) has been working formative researches and community engagement activities for the past 12 months in the three sites (Harar, Kersa and Haramaya). Haramaya site is included this year while the Kersa and Harar have been the focus from the start. A total of 48 kebeles are in the catchment of CHAMPS activities.



Child Death Notification

One of the strategies through which we plan to capture death from community is Child Death Notification. This system was established in all the three places of CHAMPS activities. This facility, hospital and community notification system helps in capturing death in the community and health facilities. In Kersa a total of 424 death notifiers have been working in the past year. In order to increase the effectiveness of this program, notification and tracking guidelines have been put in place. In Harar and Haramaya 115 and 400 community notifiers were recruited and trained this year. For the facility and hospital based notification, nurses in pediatrics and Neonate Intensive Care Unit (NICU) were included.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



To make sure CHAMPS vision is cascaded down to the community and to increase acceptability of the program, the SBS team has been organizing different community engagement activities. Photo exhibition was one of the tools used to create opportunities through which photography and art are used to focus on health problems in the area. This has helped a lot to share positive health behavior in Kersa community.



The team has been also providing community service in the form of clinical care, screening and food demonstration. These have been good ways of engaging communities. This past year the program has helped the needy and introduced CHAMPS to the wider community. The scabies campaign was an example of such activities that continued for several months in Kersa communities.



We have been also creating an opportunity to serve while providing back the Determination of Cause of Death (DeCoDe) result. One such is our activities in Harar orphanage, which had a registered a number of deaths. The campaign included clinical screening, sanitation and health education for caregivers. Sick babies were treated and referred for higher medical attention. The sanitation campaign also included children dormitories cleaning.



MEETING THE WIDER STAKEHOLDERS

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on the 8th of March every year around the world and, the Harari regional state youth, women and child affairs bureau organized a celebration in our area. It was a good opportunity for CHAMPS to present its findings on this occasion. More than 500 people attended were on the event, therefore it was a great opportunity to create awareness on CHAMPS activities.



The SBS team organized events for health professionals, and other stakeholders to increase promotion of CHAMPS and minimize Minimally invasive tissue sampling (MITS) refusals. Refresher trainings were given to death notifiers at different events.

CHAMPS CLINICAL ACTIVITIES IN HIWOT FANA

The day-to-day activities of CHAMPS in Hiwot Fana are organized by the team to counsel the families of deceased children and conduct MITS. In the last year the team has facilitated 76 MITS.

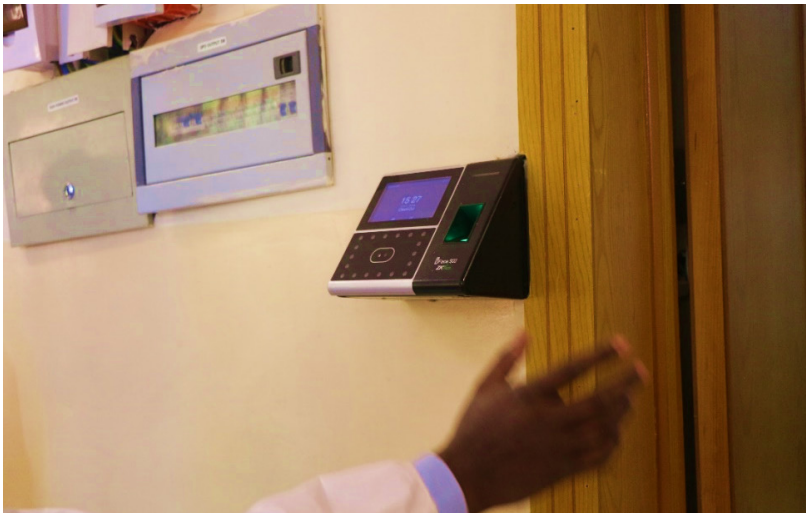
In addition, the team leases the hospital in collect samples and send them to the lab. The team also facilitates giving the results of DeCoDe back to the families



HIGH LEVEL EVIDENCE TO INVESTIGATE CAUSES OF CHILD DEATH



CHAMPS is using a high level evidence in support of identifying causes of child death. For this, it has laboratories for advanced Microbiology, Molecular Biology and Pathology. The microbiology and molecular laboratories are on the College of Health & Medical Sciences campus of Haramaya University, and the pathology laboratory is located in Hiwot Fana Hospital.



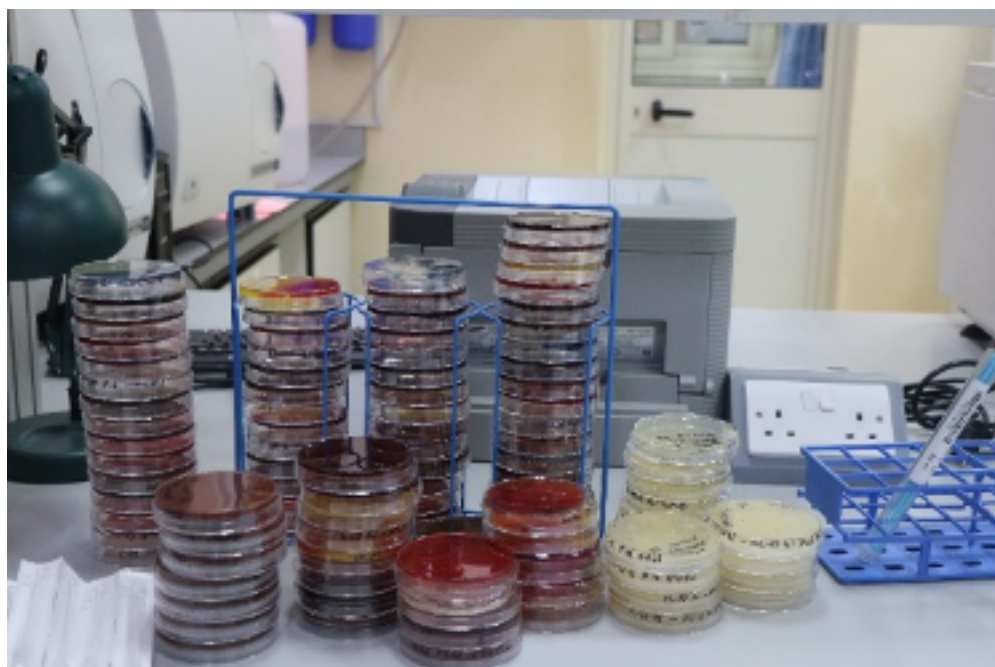
Microbiology laboratory uses high tech technologies to do the test including polymerase chain reaction (PCR) which is the technique used to identify COVID-19 virus among others. We are also doing antibody test for COVID-19 for samples collected from the antenatal clinic. This was a pilot study to see the dynamics of infection in the community.



Over the past year several kinds of samples were received and processed. 77 MITS, 2,145 antenatal care samples to test for COVID-19, and 3227 maternal infection study (MIS) samples were processed. The microbiology laboratory also supports the Government of Ethiopia's effort in testing for COVID-19. So far over 29,000 COVID-19 tests have been conducted in our laboratory.



The pathology laboratory is the only laboratory in Eastern Ethiopia using high technology. Side by side with CHAMPS research activities, it has been processing biopsies for clinical care purposes collected from hospital patients.



COMMUNITY MITS ACTIVITIES

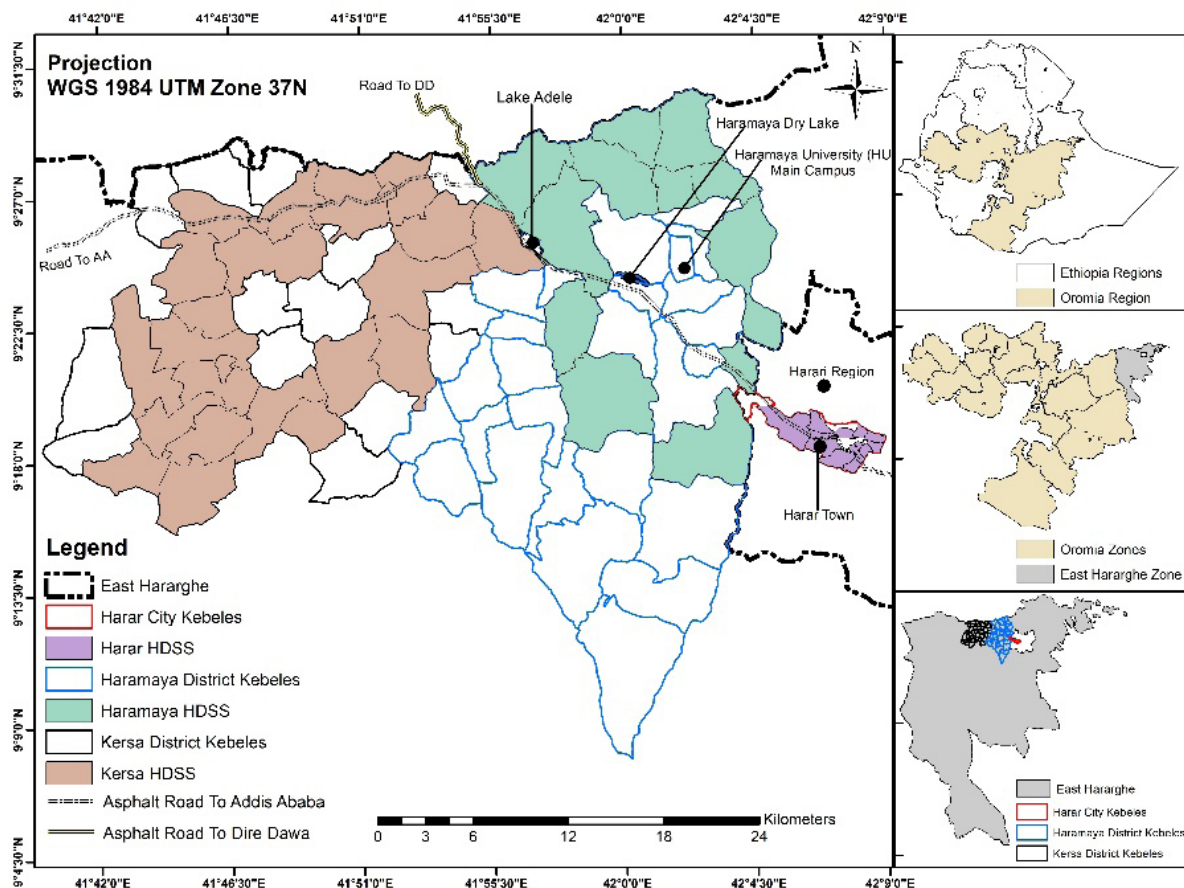
The team based in Kersa and Haramaya facilitates the conduct of MITS in the respective places, do verbal autopsies and family follow-ups. They use community gatherings as a method to promoting CHAMPS and conduct health education.

They used to conduct outreach campaigns every week to treat children and the elderly and also refer to hospitals those who need further medical attention. In addition, the team has provided training on COVID-19 for health professionals.



SUPPORTING HDSS ACTIVITIES

OUR THREE SITES



CHAMPS has been providing technical support to the day-to-day activities of the Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS). CHAMPS is keen in upgrading the current data collection system of the HDSS. For this, a team has been set to work on the details of the new program.

OTHER STUDIES GOING ON

Maternal Infections Study (MIS)

The maternal infections study has completed data collection. Now sample analysis is going on in the laboratory. In the last two years a total of 3227 samples were collected and processed.

Mortality from Bacterial Infections Resistant to Antibiotics study (MBIRA)

This study focus on detection of anti-microbial resistance contributing for death children. The study will be carried out in Howt Fana hospital and the proposed to start by March 2021.

Acute Febrile Illness (AFI)

The Acute febrile illness study will be implemented in selected hospitals in Ethiopia including Hiwot Fana. Our laboratory will be doing tests for the samples collected from Hiwot Fana and do verification for some samples collected from other sites. This study is yet to be started.

ANC-COVID

To investigate the dynamics of COVID-19 in the community, we have set established blood sample collection since April 2020 in Hiwot Fana hospital and Haramaya district health facilities (Haramaya Hospital and Aweday health center). So far we have collected over 2145 samples for testing.

DECODE

The site has conducted 3rd to 8th DeCoDe rounds in the past year and the DeCoDe Panels reviewed 77 cases to identify the cause of deaths of children and stillbirth



DATA TO ACTION (DTA)

Taking Back Results to the Community and Users

The DeCoDe results were shared with the families, communities and other stakeholders. While communicating to families the cause of deaths, the team has been giving health education and linking them to hospitals as needed.

At the community level, DtA activities include radio episodes and theatre for development on key topics. For the health facilities, technical briefs were printed and shared with seven health centers in Kersa district.



In Hiwot Fana Hospital, data sharing has been made with staff of the obstetrics department. The forum was educative and has elicited an intense discussion. Journalists in the area were also invited to such forums in order that they could mainstream maternal and child health in their regular programs. This forum has enabled them to feature health issues, for example

Radio Fana featured a news piece on CHAMPS findings, MITS and knowledge transfer. Nationally our data has been shared with the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) and Ministry of Health.



RADIO PROGRAM

In the year completed, every week there were radio programs in two languages, Amharic and Afan Oromo. The episodes focused on causes of morbidities and mortalities as identified by the DeCoDe panel. These include causes of still birth, pregnancy complication (preeclampsia, eclampsia) and ANC.

Topics related to neonatal causes of death including meningitis, cholera, sepsis, measles and neonatal health including immunization and breastfeeding.

To assess the effectiveness of the radio programs, listening groups were created and have been actively working with the team. These groups of people are representatives of the community and we use a before and after questionnaire to explore their understanding of the programs.



THEATER FOR DEVELOPMENT (TFD)

The Theater or Development approach uses community members as actors of sessions with a minimum training. In the past 12 months Tfd organizers created and develop scripts related to causes of death as identified by DeCoDe panel and other topics related to maternal and child health.

The actors performed in a close vicinity in the community to pass messages easily to community members using local language (Amharic and Afan Oromo).



PREGNANCY SURVEILLANCE

The site is trying to start pregnancy surveillance. So far preparatory activities including identifying core team, setting up IT systems, finalizing a data collection tool and translation, and starting training for some of the team on use of tablets, anthropometry and ultrasound. Further additional team will be recruited and training will be given in preparation for launching of the program in all of its sites in few months' time.



ESTABLISHMENT OF A SCIENTIFIC TEAM

HHR has set up a scientific team to support activities including generation of manuscripts, proposal development, participation in national and international conferences. The team carries out its meeting on a monthly basis. One major discussion carried out in this meeting was the initiation of a PhD scholarships supported through the data-to-action grant.



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