

Pain & Policy Studies Group • International Pain Policy Fellowship



ETHIOPIA

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For further information on Ethiopia:

<http://www.painpolicy.wisc.edu/country/profile/ethiopia>

BACKGROUND:

In Ethiopia, one of the most populous countries in Africa, palliative care and pain management are improving, but many challenges to adequate availability and accessibility of oral opioids persist. In 2007, the Government issued a National Pain Management Guideline in line with World Health Organization treatment recommendations; however, a 2012 survey of physicians found that less than a third of respondents were aware of the Guideline. In early 2014, the availability of oral morphine was limited to a few hospitals in the capital city, Addis Ababa.

In 2014, efforts to revitalize a government-led effort to improve pain management and palliative care were initiated. Dr. Endeshaw Mengistu, Director of Medical Services from the Federal Ministry of Health (MoH), was selected as the Fellow for Ethiopia and identified Dr. Yosef Mamo, a palliative care advisor to the MoH, to attend the fellowship training workshop and develop a plan to improve the availability and accessibility of opioids for pain relief in Ethiopia.

FELLOWSHIP SUCCESSES:

In 2014, to address the lack of a strong national government coordinating mechanism for pain management, the MoH organized a National Pain Management Steering Team with the relevant stakeholders, including those involved in morphine production, procurement and narcotic regulation. To date, the Steering Team has met several times and has developed an Action Plan with a clear time frame and financial needs. Additionally, a Technical Working Group was established with experts in hospice and palliative care to guide the technical aspects of the project.

Additionally, the MoH is developing a draft guideline to improve the management of the opioid supply chain to address poor opioid quantification and prescribing practices in hospitals, as well as the lack of clarity about the roles of various regulatory agencies and pharmaceutical factories.

In late 2014, Ethiopia partnered with the American Cancer Society (ACS) to launch a pain free hospitals initiative in 9 hospitals in Addis Ababa. The goal of the initiative is to successfully use morphine to treat pain in these hospitals and then scale up to other types of healthcare facilities within Addis Ababa in the future, as well as in other areas of the country.

ONGOING PROGRESS:

Local production of oral morphine has increased to meet the growing demands and as of January 2015 4,000 bottles of oral morphine solution had been distributed to hospitals involved in the ACS initiative.

The National Pain Management Steering Team continues to meet periodically to discuss issues pertaining to the coordination of opioid medicine procurement, production and regulation.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE NEEDS:

Future efforts will need to expand the successful training and opioid distribution to hospitals outside of Addis Ababa throughout the country.



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