

Report

Workshop

**“Prevention and diagnosis of cervical cancer:  
time to act to save lives”**

**November 07 - 09, 2011  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia**

Senamoksh Women’s Health Initiatives

## **Executive Summary**

The third Continued Medical Education has been conducted on November 07-09, 2011 in Addis Ababa Ethiopia organized by Senamoksh Women`s Health Center in collaboration with Ethiopian Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ESOG) and Addis Ababa Health Bureau.

This workshop was organized for the third time following the 2007 and 2008 similar workshops and it focused on “Prevention and diagnosis of cervical cancer: with the theme, TIME TO ACT TO SAVE LIVES”.

In view of covering the wider groups in the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, invitation was sent to Addis Ababa Health Bureau to facilitate the participation of midwives from all the sub-cities of Addis Ababa. On the other hand, invitation was also sent to ESOG to invite Obstetricians and Gynecologists that are interested to take part in the workshop and attend a post graduate course on Cervical Cancer Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment. Accordingly, a total of 30 participants attended the workshop.

The workshop had two different sessions; presentations and practical parts. The presentations were made by three Ob-Gyn specialists from Sweden and two other presenters from Ethiopia and handouts of presentations were provided to participants. Dr. Tekle-Ab Mekbib basically reviewed Maternal Death while Dr. Yirgu G/Hiwot covered the issues on Cervical Cancer in Ethiopia. Dr. Meseret Mengistu from Sweden had two different presentations where the first one was on cervical dysplasia: Exploring various ways and methods of treatment and the second on follow-up of patients diagnosed and treated for cervical dysplasia. Dr. Annika Lindstrom had covered the wider session with different presentations on carcinogenesis, colposcopy and its use, treatment of invasive cervical cancer, HPV tests and vaccines and colposcopy with exercises on slide shows. Dr. Märta Silber also covered two different topics on the national Swedish screening program for Cervical Cancer and sexuality and gynecologic cancers.

The presentations were conducted in the first two days of the workshop while practical training was provided on the third day in Senamoksh Clinic and Black Lion Hospital. At the end of the third day Certificate of Participation for the midwives and Certificate of Post Graduate Course attendance for the doctors had been provided.

## **Background**

Senamoksh Women's Health Clinic was established in 2005 as a knowledge center with capacity to screen, diagnose and treat women who have risks to develop cervical cancer. It is located in Kirkos Sub-city at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Senamoksh Clinic was established with the vision to relieve sickness and poverty from Ethiopian women by providing preventive health care. The major objective of this clinic is health promotion and disease prevention amongst the most vulnerable groups of women in the country.

The Senamoksh Women's Health Care Ethiopia conducted its first Continue Medical Education (CME) workshop in Ethiopia for health professionals (i.e. obstetricians/gynecologists and midwives) from the public and private sector in 2007. The second CME workshop was organized with the theme "Promoting Women's Health in Ethiopia" and covering the issues of reproductive health (RH) and also quality assurance in laboratory diagnostics at Addis Ababa Hilton in 2008.

The overall purpose of CME workshops is to strengthen the knowledge base in cervical cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment through creating synergies and exploring opportunities for collaboration. Hence, the CME had long term plan to strengthen the collaboration between Sweden and Ethiopian professionals working towards the improvement of maternal health and to open the forum for persistent experience sharing and learning.

In view of this, the third continued medical education had been scheduled for the year 2011, and participants were invited to a 3 day workshop on "Prevention and diagnosis of cervical cancer: with the theme, TIME TO ACT TO SAVE LIVES". Health professionals from ESOG and health centers in all the ten sub-cities of the capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, were the invitees out of which 15 midwives and 14 doctors were in attendance.

### **Day One at Hilton Hotel Addis Ababa**

The workshop was opened with the welcoming remark made by the medical director of Senamoksh Clinic, Dr.Haile. He welcomed everyone, briefed the three days program and invited Dr. Mengistu, founder and Executive Director of Senamoksh Clinic, to present the guests from Sweden.

### Welcoming Remark – Dr. Tassew Haile:

Welcome to this three day workshop, launched under the theme "Prevention and diagnosis of cervical cancer: time to act to save lives" prepared by Senamoksh Women's Health in collaboration with Kvinnohälsan Söder in Stockholm, Sweden.

“Dear invited guests,

Ethiopia is one of the Sub Saharan countries that adapted the MDG declaration in the year 2000, one of the goals being reducing maternal mortality ratio. There are major improvements in that line but still maternal morbidity and mortality is unacceptably high in most countries, one of the major problems being cervical cancer.

Preventing and controlling cervical cancer not only prevents death and disability but also creates substantial improvement in the health and wellbeing of women and families. Unfortunately in some countries like ours, less than 5% of women have access to any screening or cancer control program because of " ...lack of awareness of cervical cancer among the population, health care providers and policy makers; absence or poor quality of screening programs...; limited access to health care services; and lack of functional referral systems." as stated by WHO.

In one study, the most clinically effective and cost-effective strategies in the countries assessed were those that enhanced the linkage between screening and treatment, through either a reduced number of visits or improved follow-up, and that relied on less laboratory infrastructure than did conventional cytological methods.

A critical component of effective cervical cancer screening programs is the ability to offer women appropriate, effective treatment for precancerous cervical lesions, thereby reducing overall cervical cancer incidence and mortality. In developed countries, management of precancerous lesions has shifted from use of inpatient surgical methods to use of outpatient approaches. In many developing countries, like us however, clinicians must still rely on inpatient methods such as cone biopsy and hysterectomy to treat dysplasia. Introducing simpler, less invasive, outpatient treatment methods, such as cryotherapy and loop electrosurgical excision procedure (LEEP), can effectively treat high-grade squamous intraepithelial lesions (HSIL) in most women. At the same time, they minimize women's health risks, help increase program effectiveness, and reduce strain on scarce healthcare resources.

In November 2004 Doctor Meseret Mengistu, co-founder of Kvinnohälsan Söder in Sweden, initiated a private project with the mission to test, treat and prevent cervical cancer in Ethiopia.

By transferring knowledge from best practices of Swedish Cervical Cancer Screening Programs; and thereby contributing to promote and provide better health for Ethiopian women. As a direct result of the initial project the Women's Health Centre in Addis Ababa was established in 2007 to work;

- As a “Knowledge base Centre” with the capacity to screen, diagnose and treat women who have risks to develop cervical cancer
- To support local clinics and health care professionals with education, research and scientific know-how

With this objective, Senamoksh Women's Health in collaboration with ESOG carried out an international workshop on reproductive health issues in October 2008 which was a success.

Today we are here with another international workshop that is a continuation (as promised) of the workshop in October 2008.

The objective of this workshop is to share experience, knowledge and information on how to promote women's health by reducing morbidity and mortality of women from cervical cancer. We continue the work by inviting most distinguished and knowledgeable specialists in the areas of women's health specifically dealing with cervical cancer. We create the opportunity for the local health care providers to be exposed to the latest knowledge, and also to link experts from different setups to share their experiences.”

Dr. Haile presented pap screening covering the period 2007-2011 subsequent to his welcoming speech and his presentation is attached to this report.

Following the Welcoming speech by Dr. Haile, Dr. Meseret Mengistu took the floor and warmly welcomed all participants once again. Before starting the opening Remark, Dr. Mengistu called all participants for one minute prayer in memory of Ulla-Beth Strähle, developer of the data base for Senamoksh Clinic, who has passed away recently.

### Opening Remark – Dr. Meseret Mengistu

“Dear colleges and workshop participants, I welcome you all again. I would like to open this workshop by thanking all of you for just being here. This is part of my vision and vision is the

greatest asset we have. Talent helps, but it doesn't take us as far as ambition and vision do. So many challenges to realize our vision and ambition but life without challenge, is just boring.

We have to have goal to score, sometimes goals will be very unclear, maybe because we aim beyond what we are capable of, but that is not wrong either.

What we learn at school are just facts .These facts, without being integrated in to practice, vision and ambition, they just remain facts and are not optimally functional.

To be specific to this workshop, we are going to listen to world class presentations, success stories, then what? It is not about how good we are, but how good we have to be and are expected to be.

So let us promise through this workshop to deliver our best to the most vulnerable groups of our society. Since cervical cancer is the problem of the underdeveloped and the uninformed parts of the world, let us focus to register success stories here again, we know that it is possible.”

Next to the welcoming and opening remarks, the first session of the workshop, presentations started and continued for the whole two days.

### **Presentation One: Maternal Death Reviews – Dr. Tekle-Ab Mekbib**

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This session focused on maternal death and covered maternal death reviews (MDRs). The presentation was closed with a summary of guiding principles for MDRs and a conclusion

### **Presentation Two: Cervical Cancer in Ethiopia – Dr. Yirgu G/Hiwot**

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The topics covered under this presentation were background data on cervical cancer, cancer incidence in Ethiopia, cancer mortality, cervical cancer in Ethiopia, Age of Diagnosis, HPV and the link to Cervical cancer and HPV prevalence. It also included Africa and HPV and then specified it to Ethiopia and HPV. This followed with distribution of HPV, interactive hypothesis of etiology of cervical cancer. Status of screening in Ethiopia, the challenges and treatment options were also discussed

### **Presentation Three: Cervical cancer – Dr. Annika Lindström**

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This session began with an overview of the field of cervical cancer worldwide and in Ethiopia and then covered the most frequent cancers in women, age standardized mortality rate for cervical cancer in different continents and the development of cervical cancer. Different terminologies were defined and discussed in this presentation. Types of cervical cancer, primary and secondary preventions, pregnancy and dysplasia and cervical cancer and pregnancy were also reviewed.

At the end of the three presentations, discussion was made based on questions from participants and key points stressed by presenters. After tea break, presentations and discussions continued.

### **Presentation Four: The National Swedish Screening Program for Cervical Cancer - Dr. Märta Silber**

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The presentations topics covered aim of screening and the criteria for screening. Organized cervical cancer screening in Sweden was shared to participants. The difference of cancer in screened and non-screened women, the mode of detection and age and cancer were also reviewed under this session.

After a lunch break two presentations continued and various discussions were made.

### **Presentation Five: Carcinogenesis - Dr. Annika Lindström**

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The hallmarks of cancer, etiology, HPV, development of dysplasia and invasive cervical cancer have been broadly covered under this section.

### **Presentation Six: Sexuality and gynecologic cancers - Dr. Märta Silber**

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This session was mainly about cancer and its relation with the sexuality of a woman and her partner. Interrelating factors accompanying gynecology cancer and affecting sexuality, physical

changes after cancer treatment, the possible problems related with this, what can be done and suggestions on possible solutions were all covered in this presentation.

Discussion on day one was the closing for the first day of the CME and participants and presenters conducted wide discussions on the topics covered and experiences were shared.

### **Day Two at Hilton Hotel Addis Ababa**

The second day also had presentations on different topics and there was also an exercise done by the participants using photographic show on slides which was a lively and very active session of the workshop.

#### **Presentation Seven: Colposcopy and its use – Dr. Annika Lindström**

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The use of colposcopy has been widely covered under this session and was supported with photographic slides.

#### **Presentation Eight: Cervical dysplasia: Exploring various ways and methods of treatment – Dr. Meseret Mengistu**

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The existing ways and methods of treatment, the major practices in developed countries like Sweden. The different methods and options and benefits and costs have been widely discussed and covered under this presentation. The methods that could possibly be adapted in Ethiopia have been discussed.

#### **Presentation Nine: Treatment of invasive cervical cancer - Dr. Annika Lindström**

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Different treatment options and the future of surgery was presented and discussed in detail under this part.

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### **Presentation Ten: Follow-up of patients diagnosed and treated for cervical dysplasia – Dr. Meseret Mengistu**

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This session began with the brief highlight on why follow up is important and then overviewed the Swedish model. It also addressed the issues of medical responsibility, investigation, facts and guidelines, flow-chart, roles of health providers, statistical example from Sweden.

### **Presentation Eleven: HPV tests and vaccines – Dr. Annika Lindström**

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HPV tests, HPV Vaccine, HPV immunology and immune evasion, HPV vaccine safety profile and approval and vaccination programs are among the topics covered under this section.

### **Presentation Twelve: Colposcopy with slide session – Dr. Annika Lindström**

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The last presentation was two sessions with exercise on colposcopy diagnoses lead by Dr. Lindström.

### **Day Three at Senamoksh Clinic and Black Lion University Hospital**

On the last day, practical sessions under supervision by Dr. Lindström and Dr. Mengistu were performed in Senamoksh Clinic and Black Lion University Hospital. The patients were diagnosed with dysplasia or cervical cancer.

After lunch at Senamoksh Clinic, provided by Dr. Mengistu, participants filled in written evaluations and received certificates of attendance.

**TIME TO ACT TO SAVE LIVES was stressed and a home take message for all.**

**Senamoksh Women’s Health Initiative would like to thank all participants and appreciate their active participation and pass the responsibility to all to practice the home take message.**