

EDITORIAL

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Those of us who teach in one or more of the Ethiopian training programs in community health are keenly aware of the wealth of information derived from student fieldwork. Only a small proportion of this work is published and therefore accessible to community health professionals. This is unfortunate, given the quality and relevance of much of the research conducted by students while in training. In this special issue of the Ethiopian Journal of Health Development 9 original research papers have been selected which are the result of work completed within these training programs. In certain instances manuscripts were submitted upon learning of this special issue, however this is the minority. Several had been "filed for future reference"; we all know what that implies.

Papers were selected on the basis of their scientific merit and in order to have representation from each of the training programs in community health. These programs include the undergraduate training conducted in the community health departments of Addis Ababa University (AAU), Gondar College of Medical Sciences (GCMS), and the Jimma Institute of Health Sciences (JIHS). At AAU and GCMS, final year students are divided into teams during a six week field attachment. Under the supervision of a faculty member, these student teams complete a community based study. The papers titled "Blood pressure distribution and hypertension in two rural communities of Gondar Region, Ethiopia" and "Prevalence of anemia among elementary and high school students living in Gorgora" are representative of the work carried out by these student teams. At the JIHS each final year student must complete a thesis project on a priority community health problem. Dr. Ephriam's paper on "Analysis of deliveries in Jimma Hospital a four year retrospective study", was chosen as an exemplary example of the thesis submissions from the Institute's first graduating class of physicians.

Three of the studies published in this issue were completed by graduate students in the MPH program at AAU. Two papers, "Determinants of community health agent functionality in Arsi Region" and "Determinants of pre-eclampsia and gestational hypertension", represent thesis research which was conducted in partial fulfilment of their degree requirements and the third, "Focus group identification of barriers to the use of modern contraception in the Gara Muleta District of East Hararghe", was done on the student's own initiative in implementation of his district health action plan. All were advised by faculty within the community health department at AAU. Additionally, one paper, "Community based nutritional survey Geruke Jimate Peasants' Association, Illubabor Region, Ethiopia", comes from the Training and Demonstration Center (TDC) of the Ministry of Health. Twice a year the TDC conducts a 10 week accelerated district health managers course. During this training, two weeks are spent in a field site where, among several activities, the course participants complete a survey on a topic chosen by local health officials.

It is the intent of the editors of the EJHD that papers published in this special issue will lead its readers in the future to pay greater attention to the work being carried out in the varied community health training programs found in Ethiopia. It is also hoped that this will encourage students and their supervisors to seek publication of their research findings in order that the knowledge obtained through their work in the field be shared with a wider audience.

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