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NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Epi-Week- 16 (April 19 – 25, 2021)

BULLETIN Nº: 52

Issue Date: May 01, 2021

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 48,824 laboratory samples were tested in the Epi-Week-16 bringing the total number of samples tested to 2,550,394.
- A total of 10,251 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 181 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-16 bringing the total cases and death to 252,279 and 3,551 respectively.
- A total of 160,509 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 9,413 of these are enrolled in the Epi-Week-16.
- Out of total of 352,927 contacts of COVID-19 confirmed cases, 5,496 contacts were identified during the Epiweek-16.
- More than 470 thousand individuals are vaccinated the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine since the start of vaccination on March 13, 2021.

II. Statement of condolences

- We are deeply saddened by the death of Ms. Nuria Yusuf, who has served the Ethiopian Public Health Institute for many years.
- Ms. Nuria Yusuf is the Director of the Institute's Women, Children and Youth Directorate and she was also playing a role in protection section of COVID-19 pandemic response in the Nation Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC). She acquired COVID-19 and died while receiving appropriate medical treatment.
- Ms. Nuria Yusuf was recognized by the Minister of Health, H.E Dr. Lia Tadesse, for her outstanding contribution to the health sector.
- Health, H.E Dr. Lia Tadesse, for her outstanding contribution to the health sector.



The Ethiopian Public Health Institute extends its heartfelt condolences to her families, colleagues and staffs.

III. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

i. Global Situation

- Globally, new COVID-19 cases increased for a ninth consecutive week, with over 6.1 million new cases reported in the last week (Figure 2).
- The number of new deaths increased for the sixth consecutive week, increasing by 10% compared to last week, with over 138 thousand new deaths reported.
- As of April 25, 2021, a total of 142,652,739 COVID-19 cases and 3,035,552 deaths (CFR=2.13%) have occurred globally. Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 6,153,963 cases and 138,797 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-16.
- The United States of America (USA) reported the highest number of cases (30,570,426) with CFR of 1.82% followed by India (16,767,421) cases) with a CFR of 1.14%.
- In Africa, as of April 25, 2021, a total of 4,528,293 cases and 119,583 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.64%). Of these 85,323 cases and 2,458 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-16.
- In Africa, South Africa reported the highest number of cases (1,572,985) with CFR of 3.44% followed by Morocco (508,530) cases) with a CFR of 1.77%.
- Ethiopia reported the highest number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in East Africa. See the summary dashboard below.

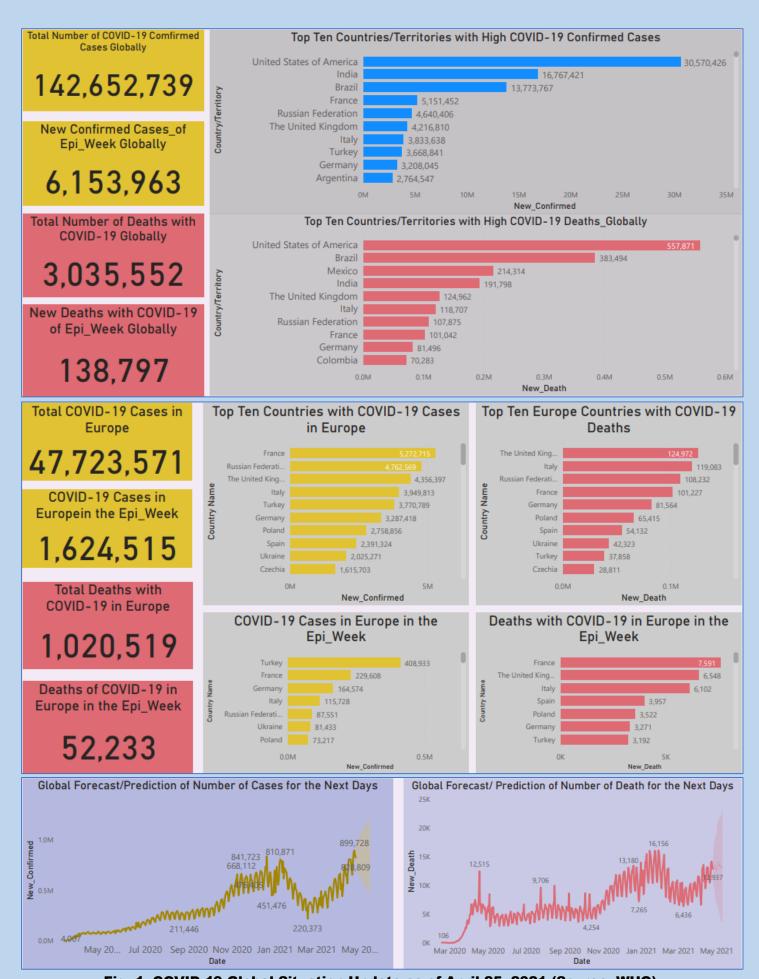


Fig. 1: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of April 25, 2021 (Source: WHO)

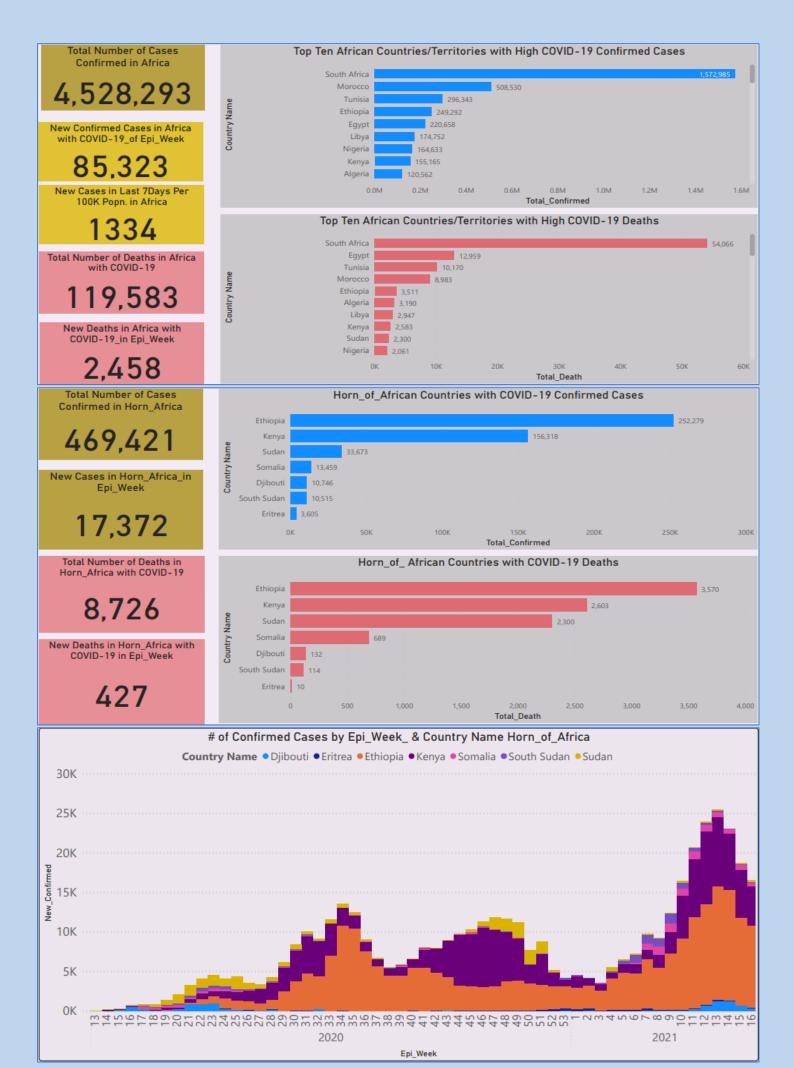


Fig. 2: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of April 25, 2021 (Source: WHO)

ii. National COVID-19 situation:

- As of April 25, 2021, a total of 252,279 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 3,551 deaths were recorded in the
 country with a case fatality rate of 1.41%. This puts Ethiopia in the fourth position by the number of confirmed
 cases and in the fifth position by the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Africa.
- Ten-thousand-two-hundred-fifty-one (10,251) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases and 181 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-16.
- In this week, there is a slight decrease (21%) in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and the number of COVID-19 related deaths have decreased 8% (for the second consecutive week).
- The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases showed a slight decrease for the third consecutive week.
- However, there is also a decrease in the number of samples tested in the week which can be the main reason for the decrease in the number of confirmed cases in the week. The decrement may also attribute to the enhanced implementation of directive 30/2020.
- Most of the cases are from Addis Ababa City Administration which may be as result of different reasons.
 High number of laboratory tests, high transmission of the disease due to the occurrence of super spreading events, decreased adherence to the public health and social measures and highest risk of variant of concern importation.
- For detail, see the summary dashboard below.

Table 1: Summary of National COVID-19 situation in the Epi-Week-16 of 2021

Regions	New_Tested ▼	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New_Deaths	Positivity Rate	# of Recovery
Addis Ababa	34405	6556	554	84	19.6	9009
Oromia	5030	1627	207	53	33.6	1470
SNNPR	3045	410	46	3	13.6	428
Amhara	2128	495	56	14	24.3	221
Afar	1137	125	0	0	11.9	81
Benshangul	648	87	18	0	20.1	202
Gambella	516	91	5	0	22.0	73
Dire Dawa	514	244	14	3	47.3	868
Sidama	514	284	37	10	63.0	416
Harari	453	146	28	9	33.1	569
Somali	335	141	6	5	38.6	95
Tigray	99	45	0	0	45.5	0
Total	48824	10251	971	181	**** 28.0	13432
**** Positivity Rate is the Weighted Averages of Regional Distributions of Rates						

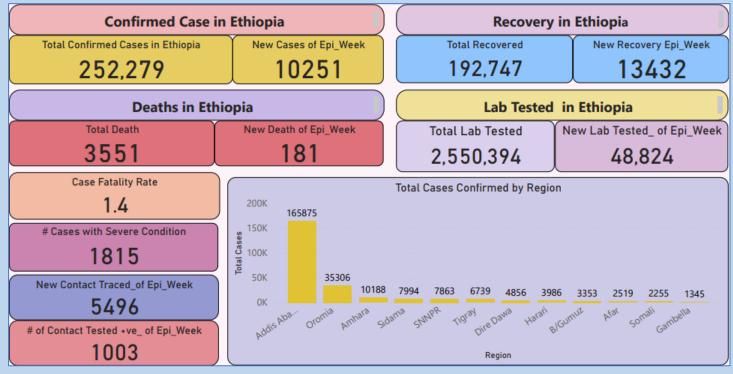


Fig. 3: Weekly summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of April 25, 2021, Ethiopia

• The trend of number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in the country shows that another wave of the pandemic is happening in Ethiopia. The current trend surpasses the peak that was observed in the month of August, 2020 (Epi-week-33 to 36) when the highest number of COVID-19 cases were recorded in the country (figure 5 and 6 below) as a result of COMBAT campaign at which time there was increased community-based laboratory testing for COVID-19.

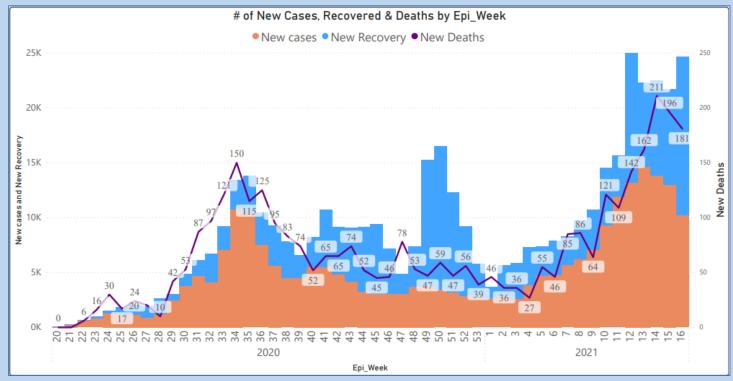


Fig. 4: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by Epi-Week as of April 25, 2021, Ethiopia

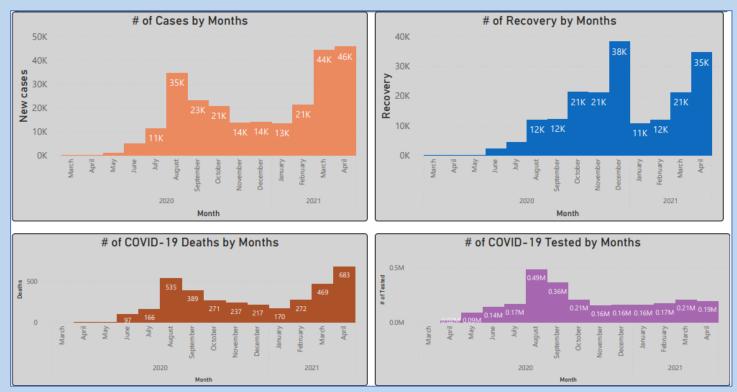


Fig. 5: Summary of monthly trend of COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of April 25, 2021.

iii. Other Epi-Surveillance Related Activities

There is ongoing travelers' health screening at point of entries (POEs), follow-up of international travelers, rumor collection, verification, investigation and information provision via toll free call center, active case detection by house to house search, contact listing, tracing and follow-up of persons who had contact with confirmed cases. There is also laboratory investigation of suspected cases, contacts of confirmed cases, SARI/pneumonia cases and community members, surveillance and assessment in school and congregated setting communities.

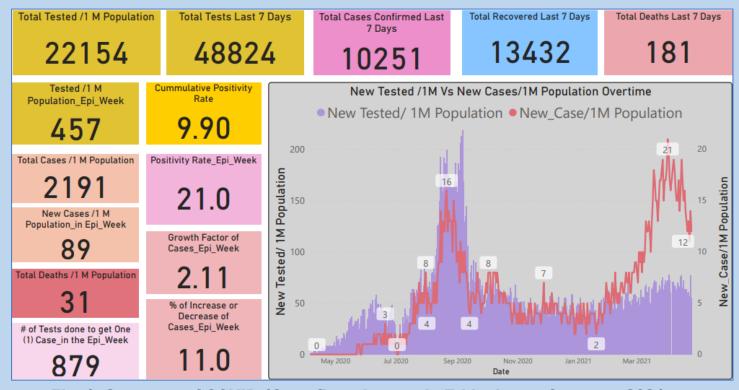


Fig. 6: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of April 25, 2021.

a. Contact tracing and follow-up:

- Contact tracing is a key strategy for interrupting chains of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and reducing COVID-19-associated mortality.
- As of April 25, 2021:
 - A total of 352,927 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 5,496 contacts were identified in the Epi-Week-16.
 - Of total contacts, 308,218 (87.33%) have completed 14 days follow-up, while 4,833 contacts are still on follow-up.
- Overall, 40,482 (11.47%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 16.05% of the total cases. However, when there is transmission of the disease at community level, it is known that an individual acquires the disease from unknown contacts.

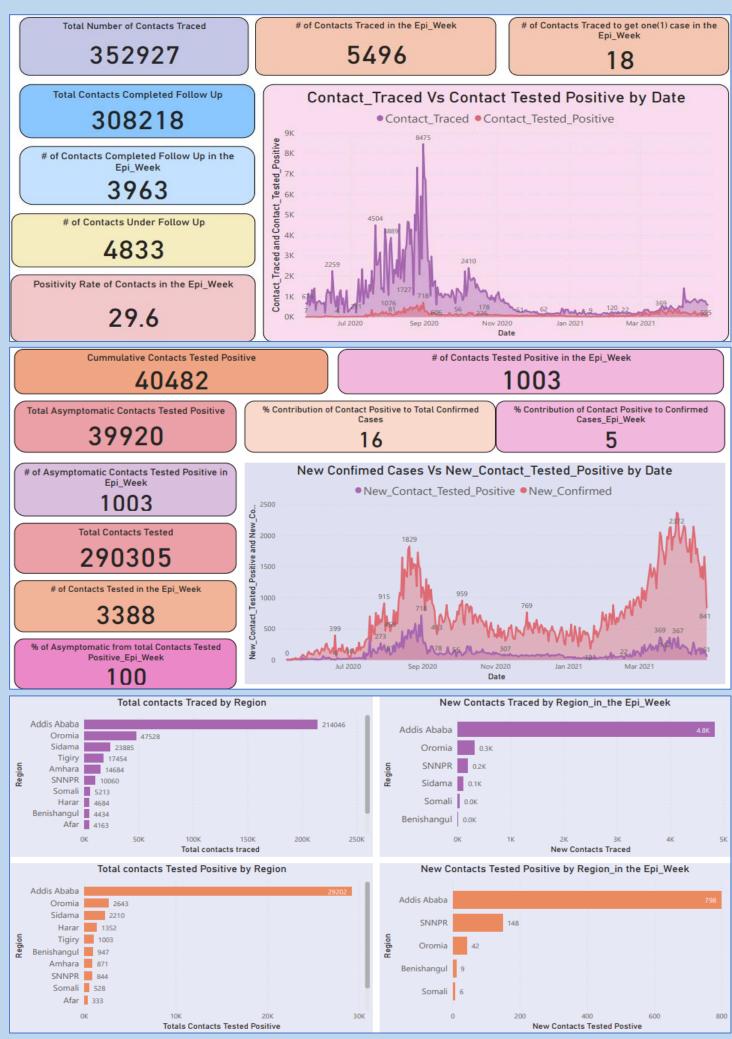


Fig. 7: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of April 25, 2021, Ethiopia.

b. Rumors collection and verification from all sources

- COVID-19 related rumors are received from different sources: Call centers, Health facilities, Contact follow up, Self-report, Travelers follow up, Point of Entry (PoE), Community surveillance and Special Settings.
- As of April 25, 2021:
 - 385,255 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 3,544 rumors were reported in the Epi-Week-16.
 - o 277,589 (71.76%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.
- 28,151 COVID-19 related calls are received through call centers in this Epi-week.

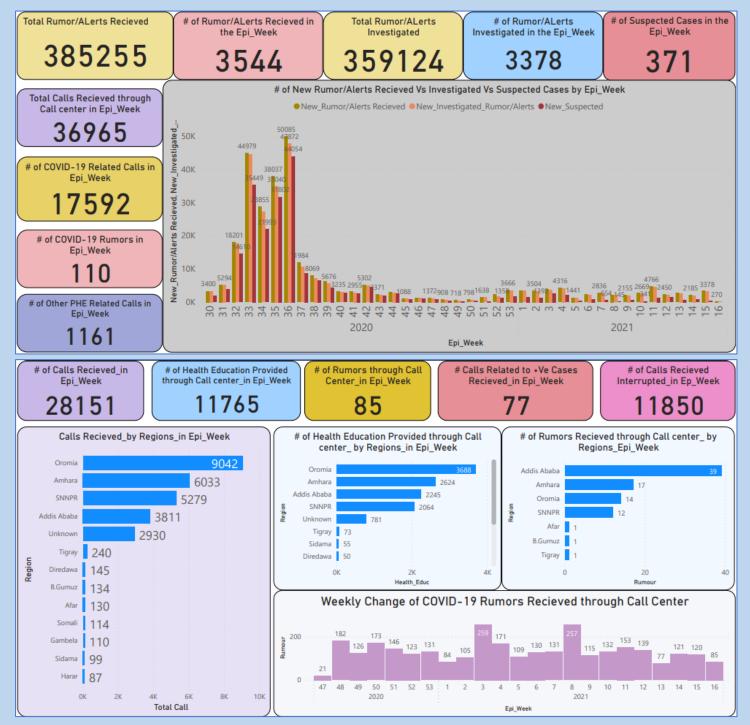


Fig. 8: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of April 25, 2021, Ethiopia.

c. Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 2,040,568 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 657,581 (32.24%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 34,286 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-16.
- As of April 25, 2021, among the passengers coming with COVID-19 PCR test result certificates, 284,705 passengers (8,689 in Epi-week-16) had PCR negative certificates while 45 (1 in Epi-week-16) passengers with PCR positive certificates were identified during health screening. A total of 86 SARS-COV-2 positive cases have been detected after arrival laboratory test.

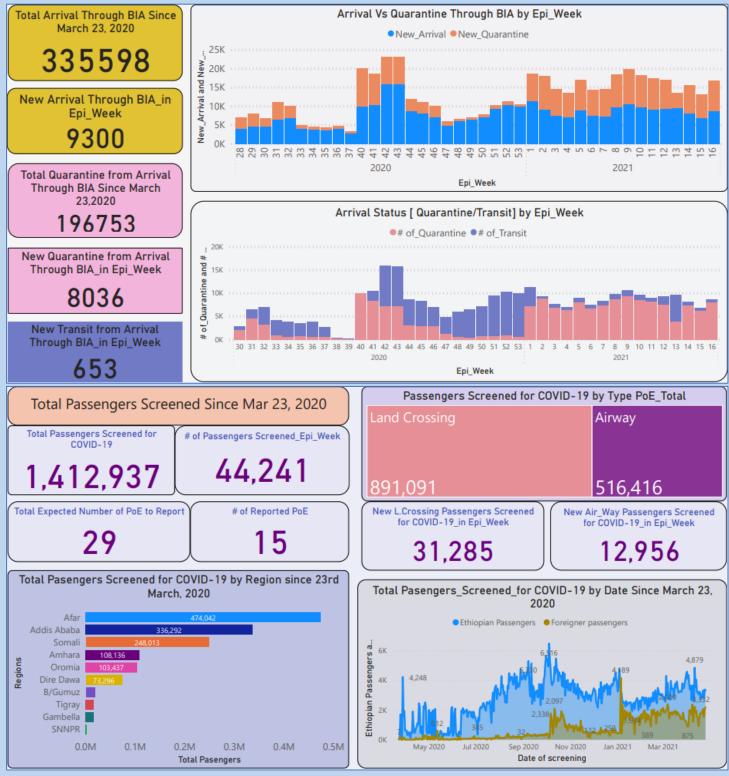
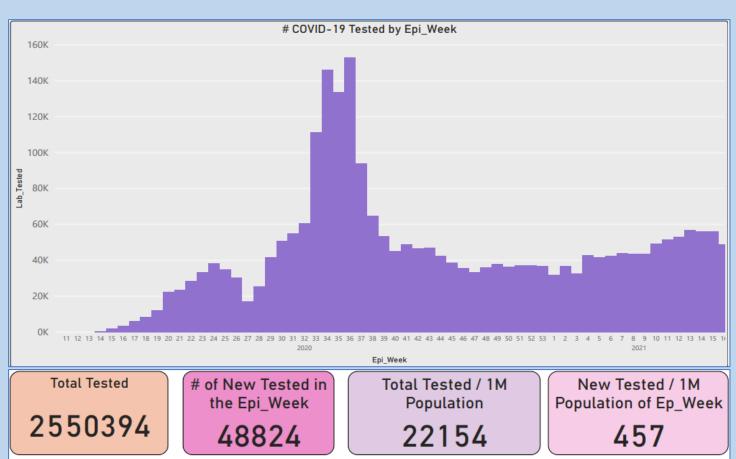
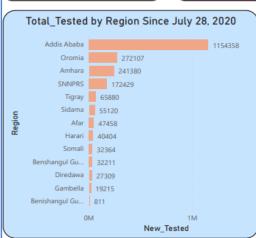


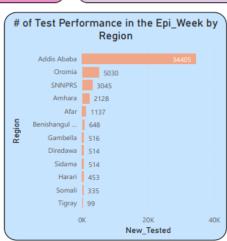
Fig. 9: Summary of Passengers screening for COVID-19 as of April 25, 2021, Ethiopia.

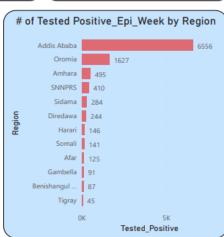
IV. Laboratory related activities

- As of 25 April 2021, a total of 2,550,394 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 48,824 laboratory tests were processed during the Epi-Week-16 which is a 13% decrease compared to number of tests performed in the previous week.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the Epi-Week-16 is 21.00%, which is lower than that of the preceding week (23.36%).
- Dire Dawa City Administration, Sidama, Tigray, Somali, Oromia and Harari regional states have reported
 positivity rates higher than the national weighted average while the positivity rate in Addis Ababa has showed
 a decrease (figure 11 below). This shows that the COVID-19 epidemic has got high spread to regions.









Region/City Admn	New_Tested	Tested_Positive	New_Deaths	Positivity_Rate
Addis Ababa	34405	6556	84	19.40
Oromia	5030	1627	53	33.47
SNNPRS	3045	410	3	13.39
Amhara	2128	495	14	24.24
Afar	1137	125	0	11.80
Benishangul Gumuz	648	87	0	20.09
Gambella	516	91	0	22.25
Diredawa	514	244	3	47.34
Sidama	514	284	10	63.00
Harari	453	146	9	33.13
Somali	335	141	5	38.56
Tigray	99	45	0	45.80
Total	48824	10251	181	27.98
		***** Positivity Rate is	weighted average of Regiona	al Distn of Rates

Fig. 10: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of March April 25, 2021, Ethiopia.

V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

- There were total of 10,878 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the Epi-Week-15, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 190,013.
- The number recovered cases has increased by 28% compared to the previous week.
- The highest number of daily cases in severe condition (1,059) is recorded in the week. This is the highest number of severe cases in treatment centers so far. This shows that there is and/or may happen scarcity of oxygen concentrators and mechanical ventilators adequate for the alarmingly increasing COVID-19 patients with severe condition.

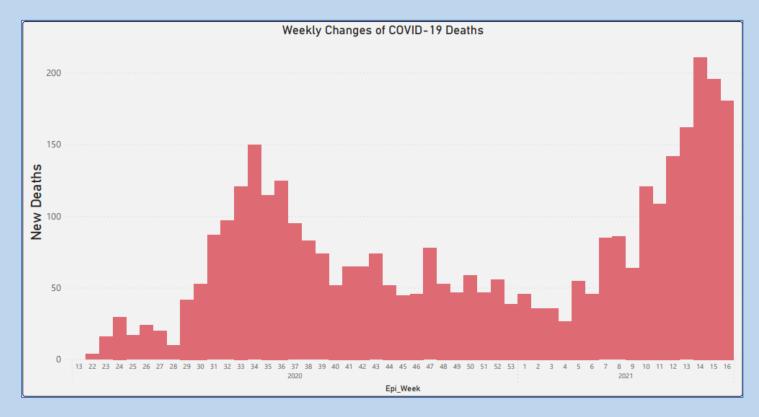


Fig. 11: Weekly trend of COVID-19 related death in Ethiopia, as of April 25, 2021.

 The number of patients in severe condition and those in need of Intensive care are rising sharply creating shortage of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and mechanical ventilators. The figure below shows that the number of patients in severe condition is by far more the number of either ICU beds or the number of mechanical ventilators.

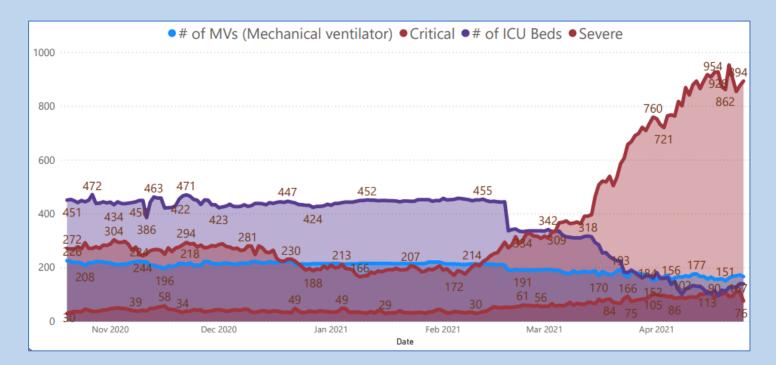


Fig. 12: Trend of mechanical Ventilators and ICU beds in COVID-19 treatment centers in relation to patients in severe condition as of April 25, 2021, Ethiopia.

Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 160,509 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 142,146 (88.56%), have recovered and 29 (0.018%) died.
- Of these, 9,413 cases have been enrolled to HBIC, 12,577 cases have recovered and three died in the Epi-Week-16.
- As of April 25, 2021, there are 19,893 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 1,968 (99 of them in the Epi-Week-16) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 697 (26 of them in the Epi-week-16) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.

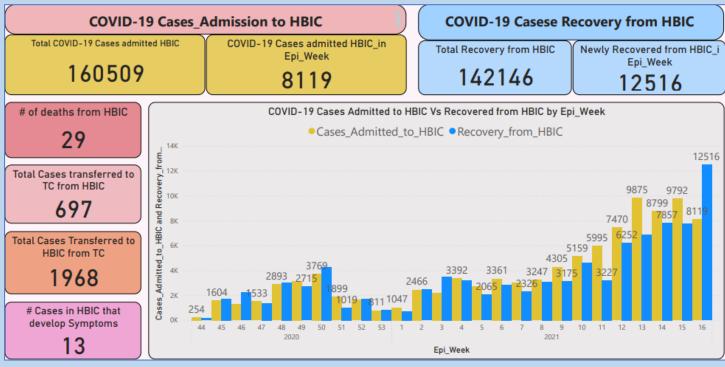


Fig. 13: Summary of COVID-19 Home Based Isolation and Care in Ethiopia, as of April 25, 2021.

VI. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Media (mass media and social media) monitoring on COVID-19 related information is ongoing.
- COVID-19 related key messages and updates shared on social media.



Fig. 14: COVID-19 related key messages situation update as of April 25, 2021 shared on social media.

VII. Coordination and Leadership

- The national PHEOC is collaboratively working with stakeholders: government agencies, partner organizations, UN agencies, embassies, hospitals, Industrial parks and others.
- Morning briefing of IMS is being conducted every day by core IMS staffs and key partners' representatives.
- Weekly leadership and strategic virtual meeting, chaired by the H.E MOH Minster, is being conducted to oversee and guide the response efforts.
- COVID-19 preparedness and response plan revision is ongoing at national level.

VIII. Challenges and Way Forward

a. Challenges

- There is shortage of appropriate facilities to manage severely ill and critical patients as the number of patients in need of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) has risen sharply.
- Happenings of super spreading events-Mass gatherings with poor physical distancing and facemask use which exacerbates the spread of COVID-19.
- Poor public adherence to the public health and social preventive measures.
- Poor adherence to the public health and social measures by public figures and leaders.
- Increasing number of cases being detected in the community and congregated settings.
- Poor attention given to COVID-19 at all levels by all responsible bodies in particular at subnational level.
- Low stock status of personal protective equipment, laboratory reagents, supplies and consumables.

b. Way Forward

- Enhancing law enforcement to enhance public health and social measures by all responsible bodies.
- Continuing the COVID-19 vaccination.
- Genomic surveillance establishment, networking and strengthening.
- COVID-19 preparedness and response plan revision at national and subnational level.
- Intensify risk communication and community engagement activities.
- Strengthened collaboration and coordination with key stakeholders and partners.
- Advocate and strengthen Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC).
- Conduct intensive testing of high-risk population group and contacts of confirmed cases for COVID-19.
- Enhance technical support, coordination and timely and accurate information sharing at all levels.

- Enhance active surveillance for COVID-19 such as house-to-house case search and detection in the community.
- Intensification of a capacity building trainings and orientation including through virtual/online platforms.
- Strengthen and sustain other essential health services besides COVID-19.

IX. COVID-19 Related News:

- India on Thursday reported more than 300,000 coronavirus cases over the last 24 hours, the highest daily global total, with more than 2,000 Covid-19 deaths. India's daily jump in cases of 314,835 surpasses the previous highest one-day rise in the world of 297,430 cases posted by the United States in January.: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/worlds-largest-single-day-spike-india-records-3-14-lakh-new-covid-cases/articleshow/82192002.cms
- Some Delhi hospitals have no oxygen, says minister: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/22/brutal-second-covid-wave-rips-through-india-live-updates
- Scientist who helped develop Pfizer-BioNTech Covid vaccine agrees third shot is needed as immunity wanes:
 https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/21/scientist-who-helped-develop-pfizer-biontech-covid-vaccine-agrees-third-shot-is-needed-as-immunity-wanes.html
- New Covid variant detected at Texas A&M lab shows signs of antibody resistance and more severe illness in young people. :
 https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/22/new-covid-variant-detected-at-texas-am-lab-shows-signs-of-antibody
 - resistance-and-more-severe-illness-in-young-people.html?recirc=taboolainternal
- Drugs Controller General of India, DGCI, on Friday (April 23) approved the emergency use for Zydus Cadila's
 Pegylated Interferon alpha-2b, 'Virafin' for treating moderate COVID-19 infection in adults.:
 https://zeenews.india.com/india/breaking-news-dgci-approves-emergency-use-of-zydus-cadilas-virafin-for-moderate-covid-19-infection-2356968.html
- Many who never tested Covid+ are now having post-Covid symptoms
 https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/miscellaneous/many-who-never-tested-covid-are-now-having-post-covid-symptoms/weird-cases/slideshow/79034668.cms

X. Public Health Policy Recommendation

Advice for the Public:

- For any individual confirmed to have COVID-19 and who is candidate for Home Based Isolation and Care:
 - o Properly isolate from other family members.
 - Take full responsibility in prevention of transmission
 - o Strictly adhere to the National Directive of Home-Based Isolation& Care.
 - Provide reliable information during regular follow up either by phone or home visit.
 - Report to nearest health facilities/follow up team in case of any emergency, appearance of new symptoms or worsening of existing symptoms.
- It is important to be informed of the situation and act appropriately to protect yourself and your family.

- Wash hands frequently
- Don't touch your mouth, nose or eye by unwashed hands
- Keep physical distancing; avoid mass gathering and shaking hands.
- For most people, COVID-19 infection will cause mild illness however, it can make some people very ill and, in some people, it can be fatal.
- Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes) are at risk for severe disease.
- If anybody had contact with a COVID-19 confirmed patient, he/she should call 8335 or 952 or report to regional toll-free lines or to the nearby health facilities.

National/Regional official websites, social media pages and toll-free hotline for COVID-19 information

MOH/EPHI/Region	Facebook page	Toll-free hotline
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Main Website	https://www.ephi.gov.et/	8335/952
Ethiopian Public Health Institute COVID-19 Website	https://covid19.ephi.gov.et/	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/ephipage/	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Twitter Page	https://twitter.com/EPHIEthiopia	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Telegram Channel	https://t.me/EthPHI	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvvTzeY- IJiQfEFBULH9Mkw	
Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Website	www.moh.gov.et	952
Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/EthiopiaFMoH/	
Afar Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/afarrhb.org/	6220
Amhara Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Amhara-Healthbureau-682065755146948/	6981
Benishangul Gumuz Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Benishangul-Gumuz-Health-Bureau-1676282159265517/	6016
Gambela Regional Health Bureau	https://fb.me/gambellaregionhealthbureau	6184
Harari Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Harari-Regional-Health-Bureau-1464182130355007/	6864
Oromia Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/OromiaHealth/	6955
Somali Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/srhbdotcom/	6599
SNNP Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/snnprhealthbureau/?ref=br_rs	6929
Tigray Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/tigrayrhb/	6244
Dire Dawa city Administration Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Dire-Dawa-Administration- Health-Bureau-1371606266279524/	6407
Addis Ababa City Administration Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/aahb.gov.et/	6406

Health Evidence summary

Articles/Comment/ Correspondence/	Summary
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Thrombosis and Thrombocytopenia after ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 Vaccination. https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM oa2104882?query=featured_coronavirus	 In this study findings in five patients presented with venous thrombosis and thrombocytopenia 7 to 10 days after receiving the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine is reported. The patients were health care workers who were 32 to 54 years of age. All the patients had high levels of antibodies to platelet factor 4–polyanion complexes. The patients had had no previous exposure to heparin. The study proposes that this represent a rare vaccine-related variant of spontaneous heparin-induced thrombocytopenia referred to as vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia. The five cases occurred in a population of more than 130,000 vaccinated persons.
Tocilizumab in Hospitalized Patients with Severe Covid-19 Pneumonia. https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJM oa2028700?query=recirc_artType_railA_article	 The use of tocilizumab, a monoclonal antibody against the interleukin-6 receptor, has resulted in better outcomes in patients with severe Covid-19 pneumonia in case reports and retrospective observational cohort studies. This is a phase 3 trial. 452 patients who were hospitalized with severe Covid-19 pneumonia were randomly assigned in a 2:1 ratio and received a single intravenous infusion of tocilizumab (at a dose of 8 mg per kilogram of body weight) or placebo. In this study involving hospitalized patients with severe Covid-19 pneumonia, the use of tocilizumab did not result in significantly better clinical status or lower mortality than placebo at 28 days.

COVID-19 updates and sources of evidence:

Source	Link
WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard	https://covid19.who.int/
Africa CDC Dashboard, COVID-19	https://au.int/en/covid19
Surveillance Dashboard	
WHO COVID-19 daily situation reports	https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-
	coronavirus-2019/situation-reports
WHO Academy mobile learning app for health	Android-
workers, COVID-19 information	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.who.WH
	OA Apple- https://apps.apple.com/us/app/who-
	academy/id1506019873





The above presented Quick Reader (QR) code takes you to a portal that you can access updates and all COVID-19 related information available (https://www.ephi.gov.et/index.php/public-health-emergency/novel-corona-virus-update)

DISCLAIMER

This weekly bulletin is produced based on figures pulled from official releases of the World Health Organization and activities and reports of all the sections under the Incident management System.

This Weekly Bulletin series of publications is published by the Ethiopian public health Institute (EPHI), public health emergency operation center (PHEOC). The aim of this bulletin is to inform decision makers within the institute and FMOH, UN agencies and NGOs about COVID-19 preparedness and response activities. All interested health and other professionals can get this bulletin at the Institute website; www.ephi.gov.et

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