Goiter Prevalence and Iodine Status in Ethiopia

Table 1 presents the prevalence of goiter among adolescent girls (10–19 years) and women of reproductive age (15–49 years). The findings indicate that the prevalence of goiter (palpable and swelling neck) among adolescent girls is 1%, whereas it is 4% among women of reproductive age. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a goiter prevalence of ≥5% in a population is considered indicative of a public health problem. Thus, the observed prevalence in Ethiopia falls below this threshold, suggesting that goiter is currently a relatively low-burden public health concern in the country.

This is further substantiated by indicators of iodine status. The median inter quartile range (IQR) of urinary iodine concentration (UIC) among women was 220 μg/L (121.8, 366.9), while school-aged children demonstrated a median (IQR) UIC of 257 μg/L (141.1, 417.6). Both values met the threshold of the WHO-recommended cutoff of 100 μg/L, confirming adequate iodine status and reflecting the effectiveness of national iodine deficiency disorder (IDD) control measures.

The marked reduction in goiter prevalence can be attributed to the successful implementation of Ethiopia's universal salt iodization (USI) program. By ensuring that household salt is adequately iodized, the program has significantly improved population-level iodine nutrition and mitigated the risk of IDD. The detail about USI coverage and urinary iodine has been reported in the national food and nutrition strategy baseline survey.

To sustain and further consolidate these achievements, Ethiopia must continue to prioritize and strengthen USI coverage. This includes maintaining rigorous monitoring systems, enforcing quality control standards, and addressing potential gaps in access to adequately iodized salt across all regions.

Table 1. Goiter prevalence among women reproductive age and adolescent girls: Results from National Food and Nutrition Strategy Baseline Survey

Prevalence	**Adolescent girls aged 10 -19 years**		**Women of reproductive age 15-49 years**	
	Unweighted (n=6087)	Weighted (n=9160000)	Unweighted (n=17200)	Weighted (n=22251000)
%	1.3		4.0	