



## NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

### COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

## WEEKLY BULLETIN

WHO Epi-Week-53 (December 28, 2020 – January 03, 2021)

BULLETIN No: 36

Issue Date: January 13, 2021

## I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 37,004 laboratory samples were tested in the WHO-Epi-Week-53.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the WHO-Epi-Week-53 is 7.45%, which is lower than the preceding week (7.81%).
- A total of 2,758 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 39 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the WHO Epi-Week-53 bringing the total cases and death to 125,622 and 1,948 respectively.
- A total of 75,802 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 2,767 of these are enrolled in the WHO-Epi-Week-53.
- Out of a total of 312,314 contacts of COVID-19 confirmed cases, 2,000 contacts were identified during the WHO Epi-week-53.
- A consultative forum targeting activities for COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control has been held.
- International Day of Epidemic Preparedness was celebrated for the first time on December 27, 2020.
- H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed expressed the need to enhance COVID-19 preventive measures.
- 'Save the Children Ethiopia' has donated 505 tablets to the Ministry of Health to support the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control to update the health information system and service delivery.

## II. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Health (MOH) and Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) in collaboration with partners have intensified response efforts to prevent the spread and severity of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Ethiopia. The national and the regional Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC) has been activated and laboratory diagnosis capacity has been expanded to other national institutions, subnational and private laboratories.

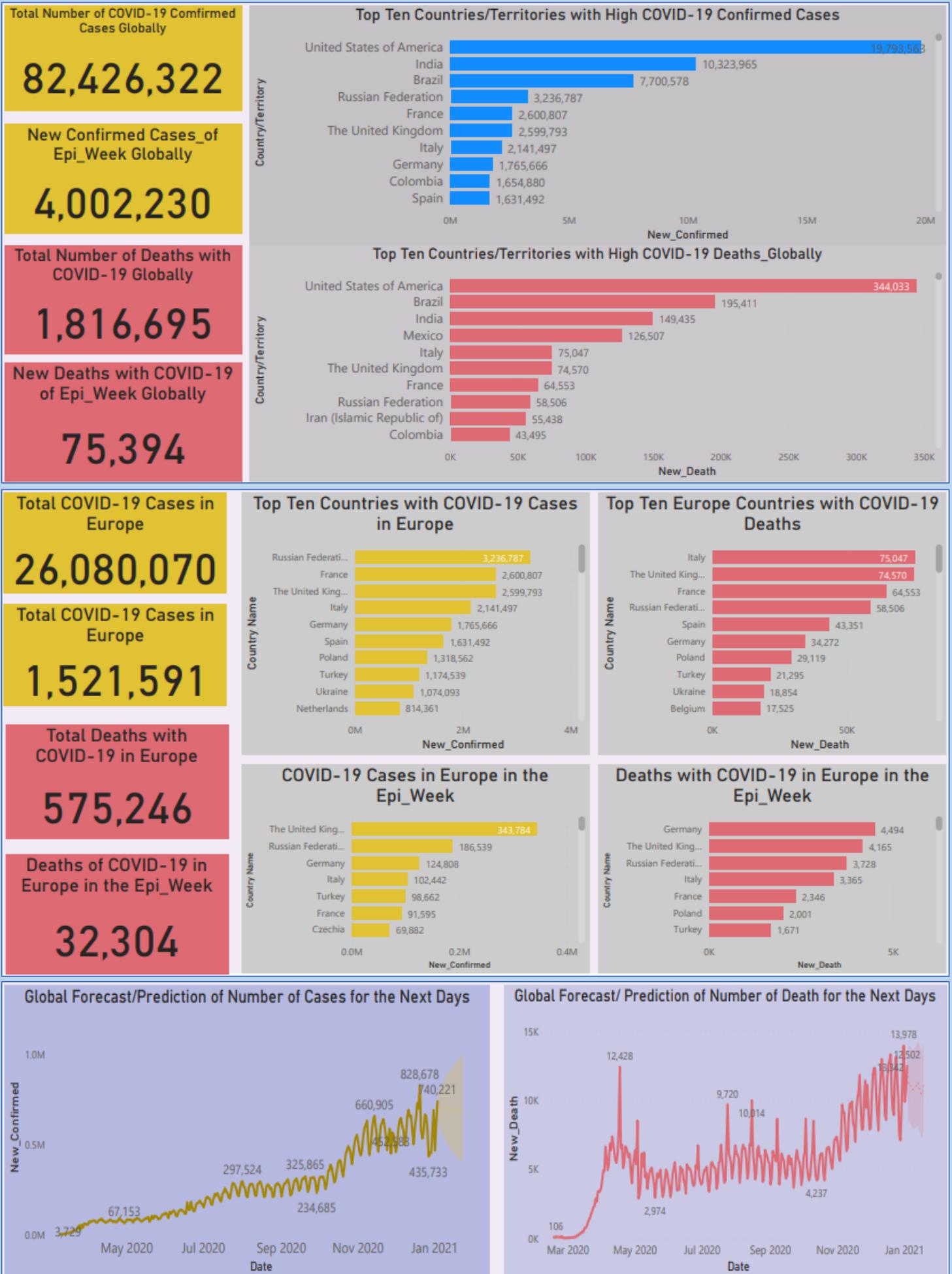
The national and regional PHEOC are playing a pivotal role in coordinating resources from different responding agencies and coordinating COVID-19 related information through regular EOC meetings and partners' coordination forums. The MOH and EPHI are providing information to the public and stakeholders on a regular and uninterrupted manner using different means of communication modalities.

The WHO and other partners are currently supporting in scaling-up preparedness and response efforts and implementation of related recommendations suggested by the IHR Emergency Committee.

## III. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

### Global Situation

- Between December 31, 2019 and January 03, 2021, COVID-19 pandemic affected 235 countries/territories causing 82,426,322 cases and 1,816,695 deaths (CFR=2.20%) globally.
- Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 4,002,230 cases and 75,394 deaths were reported during the WHO Epi-Week-53.
- The United States of America (USA) reported the highest number of cases (19,793,563) with CFR of 1.74% followed by India (10,323,965) cases) with a CFR of 1.45%.
- In Africa, 57 countries/territories have reported COVID-19 cases.
- As of January 03, 2021, a total of 2,814,968 cases and 66,300 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.36%). Of these 165,344 cases and 4,329 deaths were reported during the WHO-Epi-Week-53.
- In Africa, South Africa reported the highest number of cases (1,088,889) with CFR of 2.68% followed by Morocco (442,141 cases) with a CFR of 1.70%.
- 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 January 03, 2021 (Source: WHO)**

# of African Countries/Territories with COVID-19 Confirmed Cases

**57**

Total Number of Cases Confirmed in Africa

**2,814,968**

New Confirmed Cases in Africa with COVID-19\_of Epi\_Week

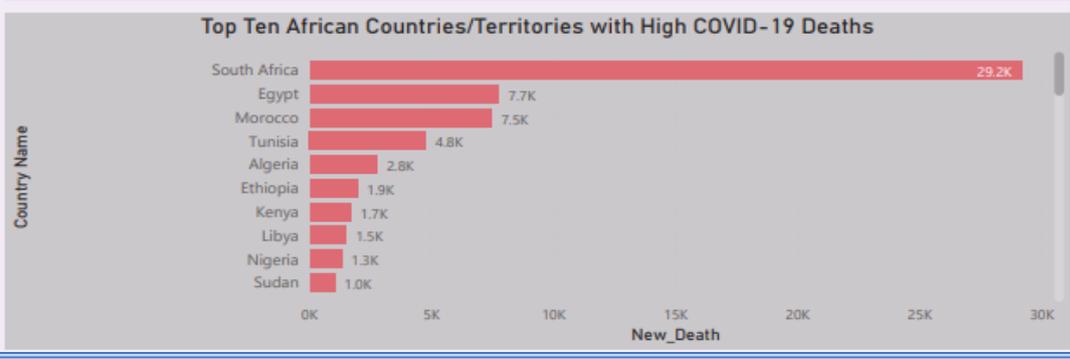
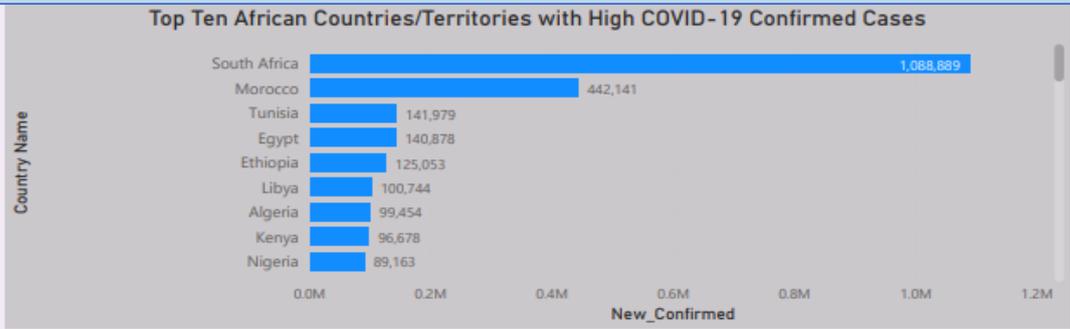
**165,344**

Total Number of Deaths in Africa with COVID-19

**66,300**

New Deaths in Africa with COVID-19\_in Epi\_Week

**4,329**



Total Number of Cases Confirmed in Horn\_Africa

**254,402**

New Cases in Horn\_Africa\_in Epi\_Week

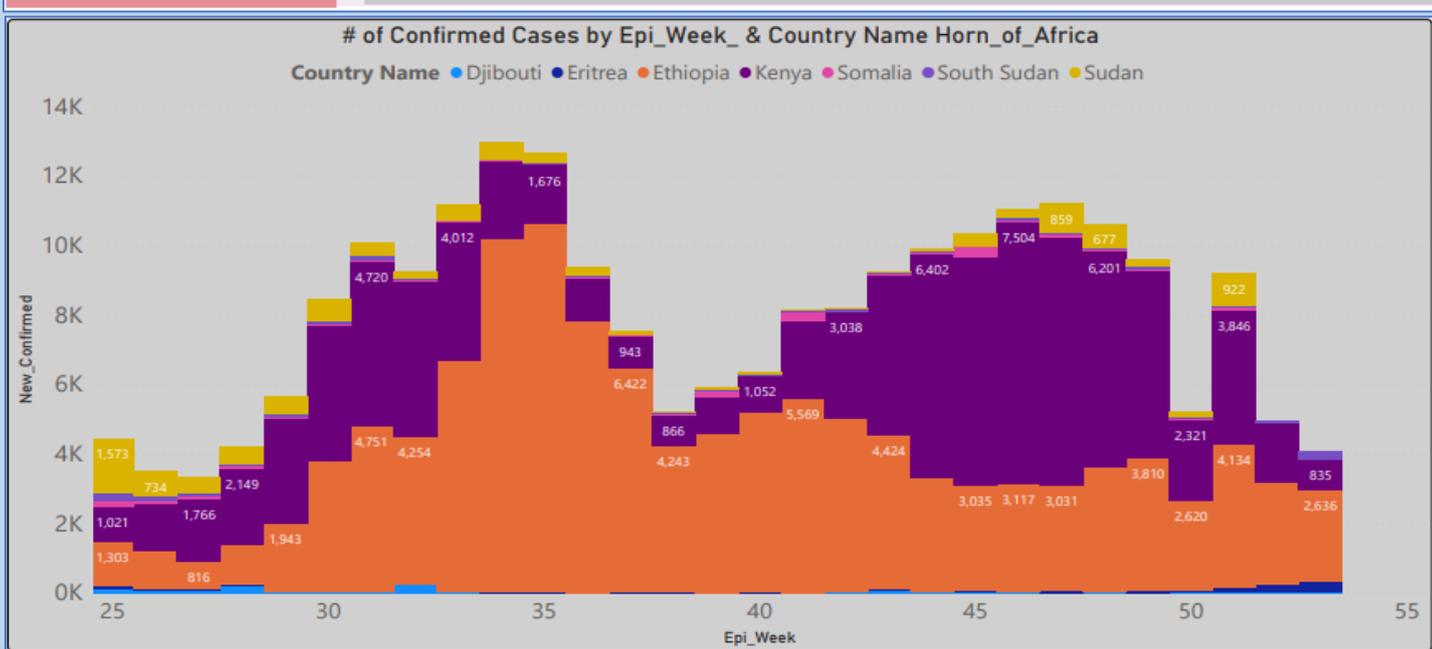
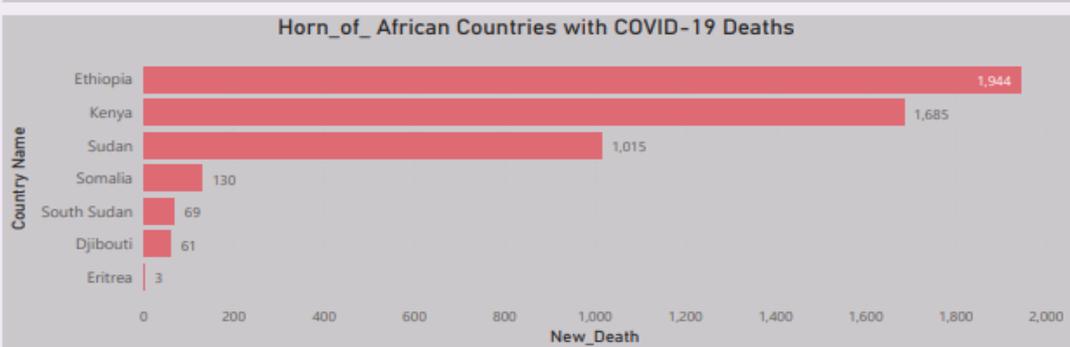
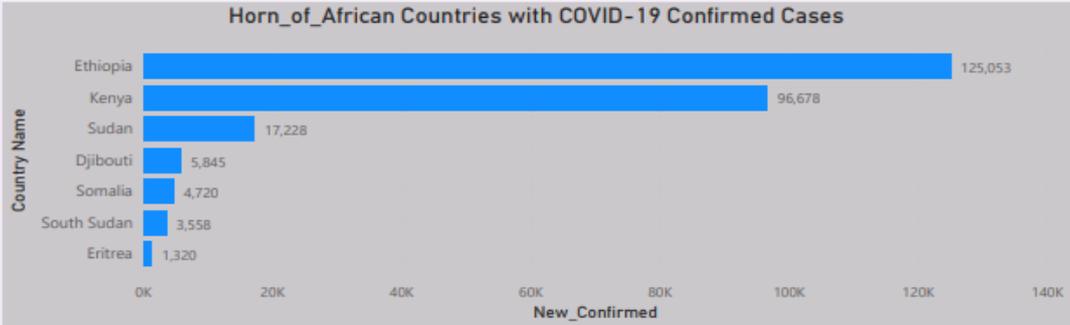
**4,109**

Total Number of Deaths in Horn\_Africa with COVID-19

**4,907**

New Deaths in Horn\_Africa with COVID-19 in Epi\_Week

**79**



**Fig. 2: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of January 03, 2021 (Source: WHO)**

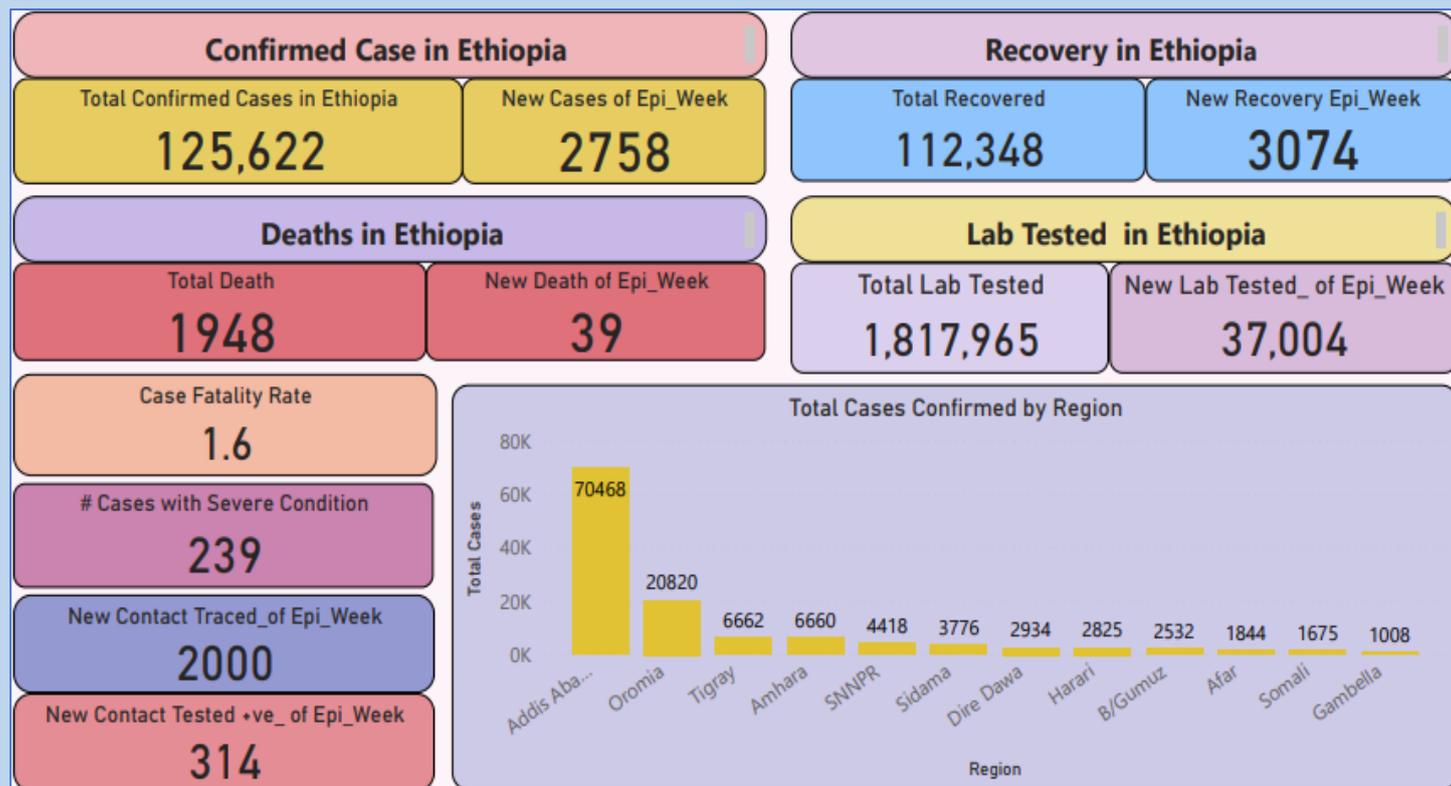
## National COVID-19 situation:

- Two-thousand-seven-hundred-fifty-eight (2,758) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases (5% decrease compared to that of Epi-Week-52) and 39 COVID-19 related deaths (30% decrease compared to that of Epi-Week-52) were reported during the WHO Epi-Week-53.
- As of January 03, 2021, a total of 125,622 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 1,948 deaths were recorded in the country.
- For detail, see the summary dashboard below.

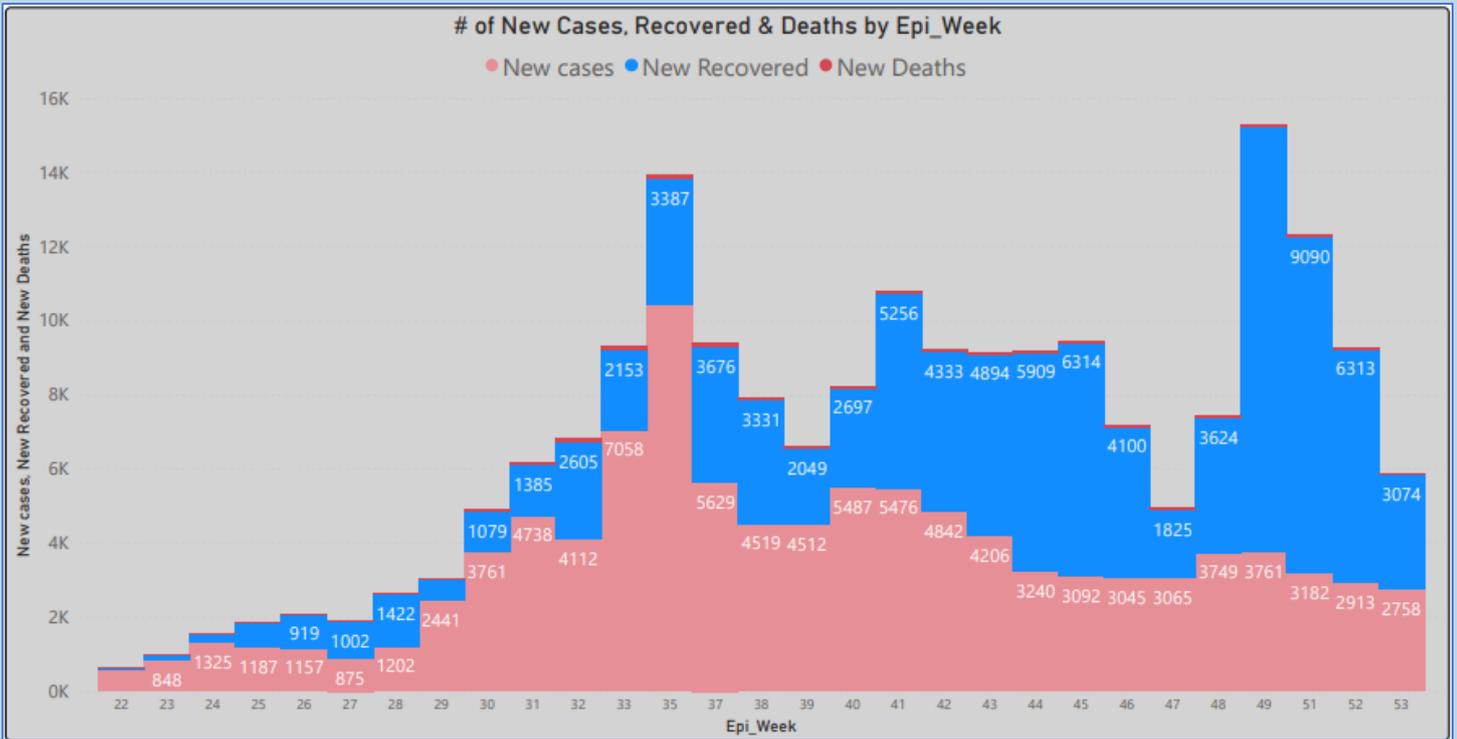
**Table 1: Summary of National COVID-19 situation in the WHO-Epi-Week-53**

Regions	New_Tested	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New Death	Positivity Rate	Recovery Rate
Addis Ababa	26737	2162	195	29	8.0	26.4
SNNPR	2815	53	7	3	1.9	88.4
Oromia	2814	366	60	6	14.7	23.0
Afar	1332	3	0	0	0.4	44.0
Sidama	1208	48	21	0	4.6	72.0
Amhara	966	87	17	0	9.9	53.0
Benshangul	319	4	0	0	4.7	27.0
Harari	314	11	5	1	2.9	29.0
Gambella	259	0	0	0	0.0	60.0
Dire Dawa	240	24	1	0	7.1	35.0
Somali	0	0	0	0	0.0	30.0
Tigray	0	0	0	0	0.0	76.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37004</b>	<b>2758</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>47.0</b>

\*\*\*\* Positivity & Recovery Rates are Weighted Averages of Regional Distributions of Rates



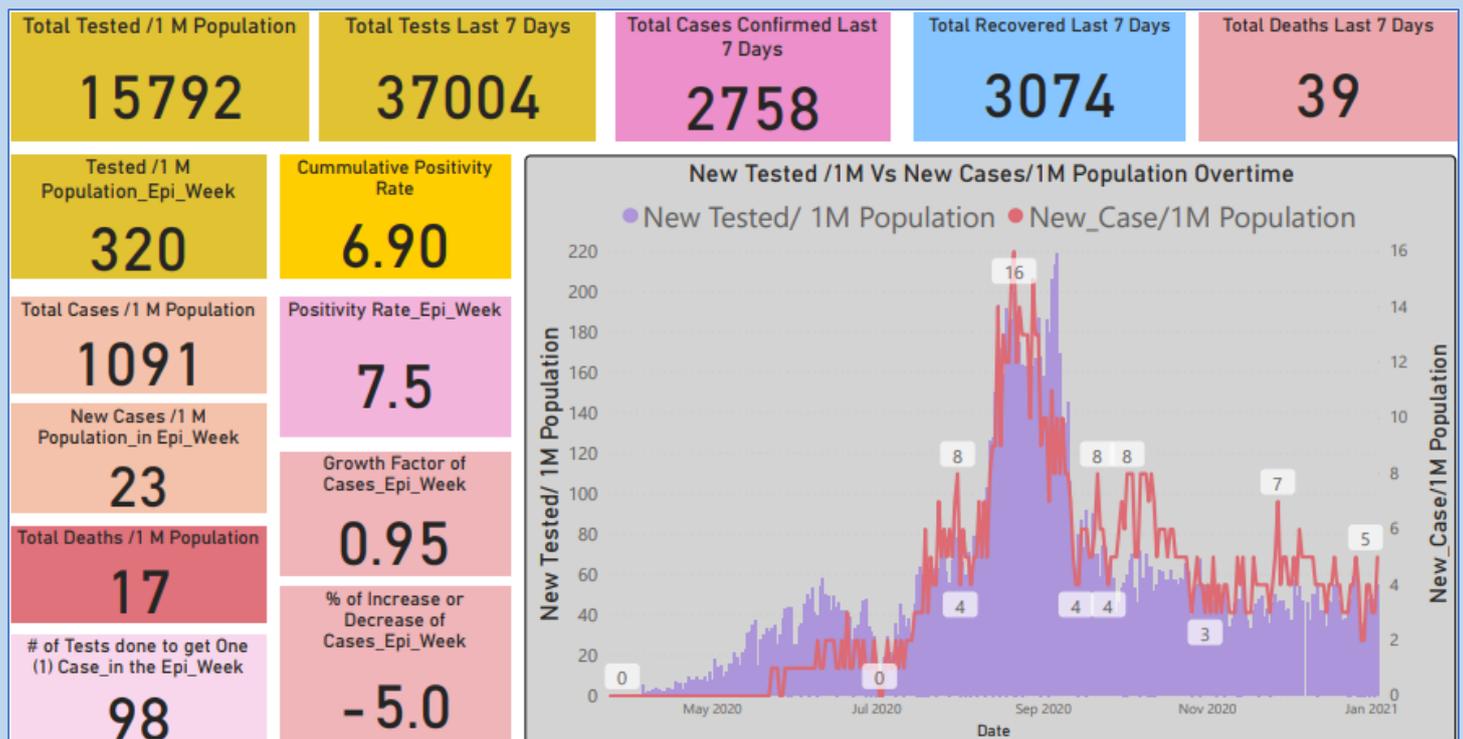
**Fig. 3: Weekly summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of January 03, 2021, Ethiopia**



**Fig. 4: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by WHO Epi-Week as of January 03, 2021, Ethiopia**

### Epi-Surveillance and Laboratory Related Activities

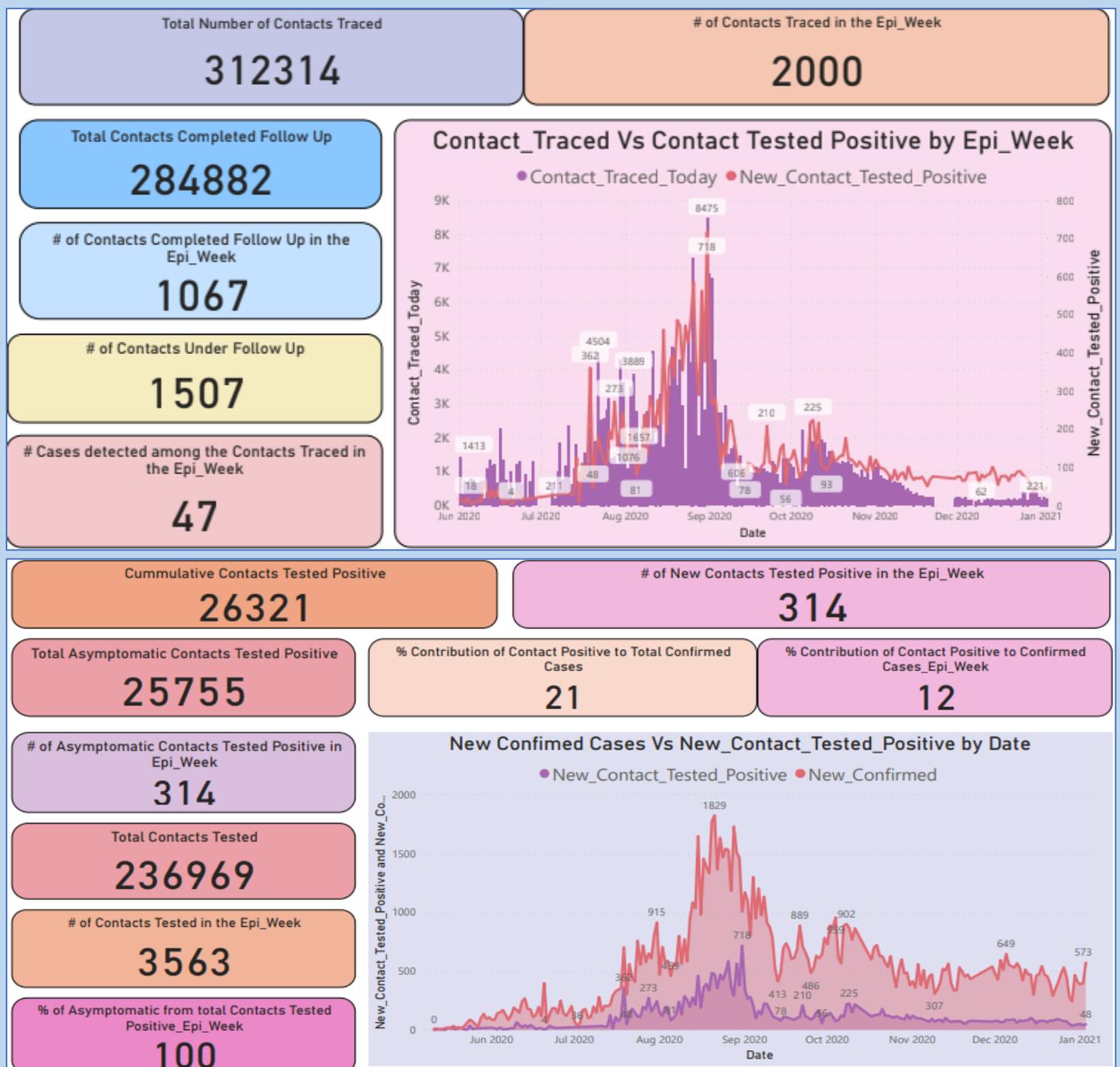
There is ongoing travelers' health screening at point of entries (POEs), follow-up of international travelers, rumor collection, verification, investigation and information provision via toll free call center, active case detection by house to house search, contact listing, tracing and follow-up of persons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



**Fig. 5: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of January 03, 2021.**

## Contact tracing and follow-up:

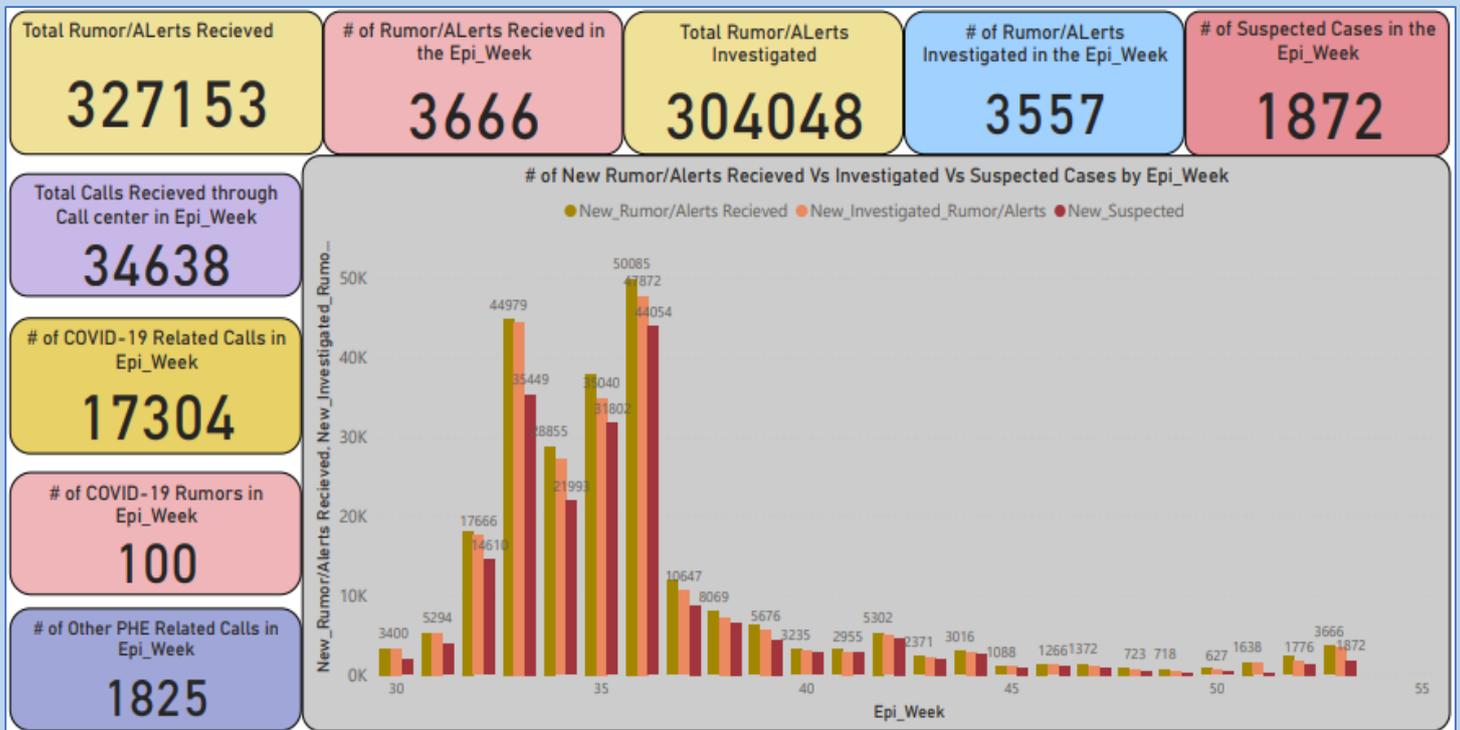
- As of January 03, 2021:
  - A total of 312,314 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 2,000 contacts were identified in the WHO-Epi-Week-53.
  - Of total contacts, 284,882 (91.21%) have completed 14 days follow-up, while 1,507 contacts are still on follow-up.
  - 716 (0.23%) contacts have developed COVID-19 suggestive symptoms. Of these symptomatic contacts, 571 (79.75%) have tested positive.
- Overall, 26,321 (8.42%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 20.95% of the total cases.



**Fig. 6: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of January 03, 2021, Ethiopia.**

## Rumors collection and verification from all sources

- As of January 03, 2021:
  - 327,153 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 3,666 rumors were reported in the WHO-Epi-Week-53.
  - 250,631 (76.60%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.



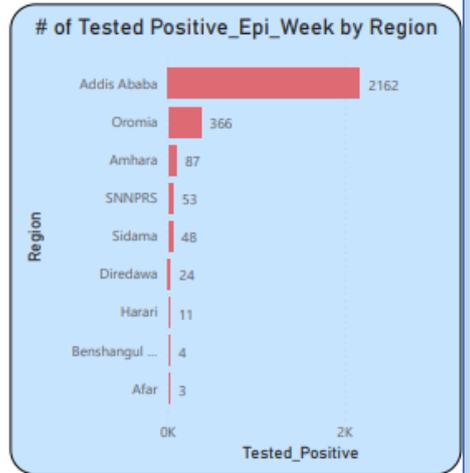
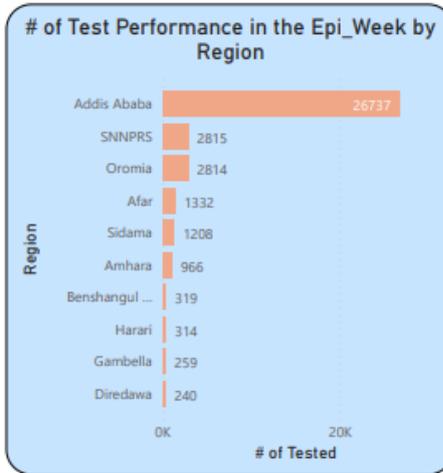
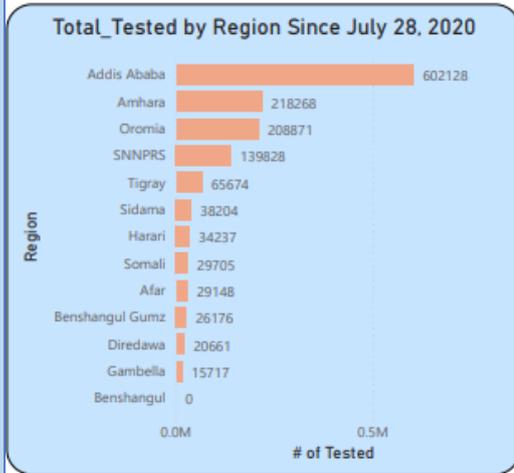
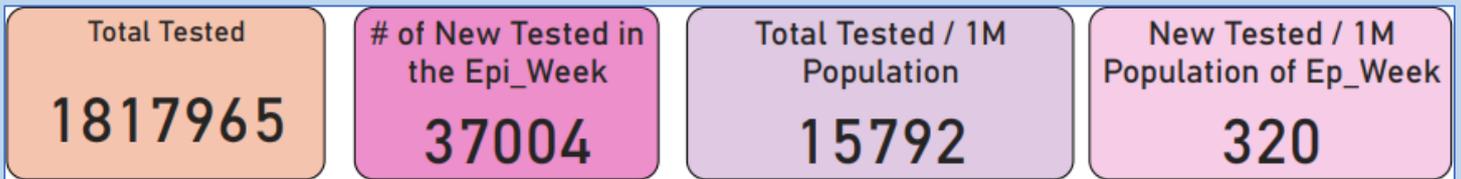
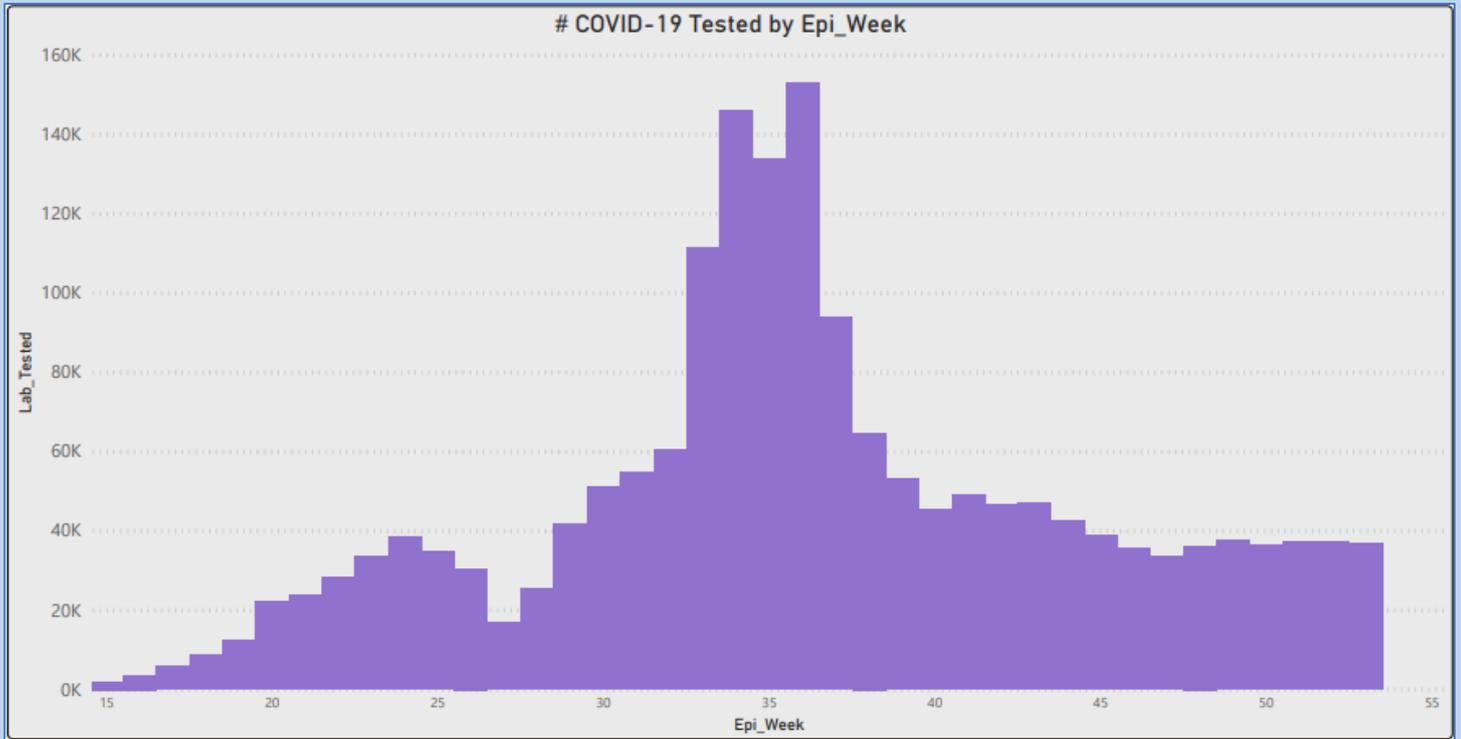
**Fig. 7: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of January 03, 2021, Ethiopia.**

## Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 1,519,261 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 555,804 (36.68%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 26,471 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-53.
- Based on Directive 30/2020 there is no Institutional Quarantine at the national level because all international passengers who pass through the point of entries should bring negative valid RT-PCR test result.
- The total number of population quarantined since March 23 to October 3, 2020 was 69,383.

## Laboratory related activities

- As of 03 January 2021, a total of 1,817,965 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 37,004 laboratory tests were processed during the WHO Epi-Week-53.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the WHO-Epi-Week-53 is 7.45%, which is a bit lower than the preceding week (7.81%).
- The overall positivity rate for the laboratory test since the occurrence of the disease in the country is 6.91%.



**Fig. 8: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of January 03, 2021, Ethiopia.**

## IV. 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 Minister, is being conducted to oversee and guide the response efforts.
- A consultative forum targeting activities for COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control has been held. The consultative forum was organized by the Amhara National Regional Health Bureau. At the forum, the Minister of Health, Dr. Lia Tadesse, said that since the occurrence of COVID-19 pandemic, a number of activities have been carried out in the region as well as nationally to prevent and control the epidemic. She reiterated that the current public negligence towards COVID-19 prevention measures needs to be addressed immediately.



**Fig. 9: Consultative forum targeting activities for COVID-19 pandemic prevention, Dec. 29, 2020, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.**

- International Day of Epidemic Preparedness was celebrated for the first time on December 27, 2020. The first ever International Day of Epidemic Preparedness was called for by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate the importance of the prevention of, preparedness for and partnership against epidemics.



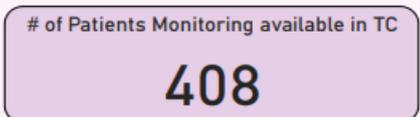
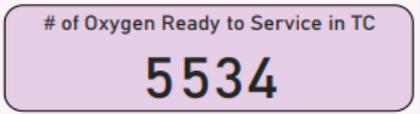
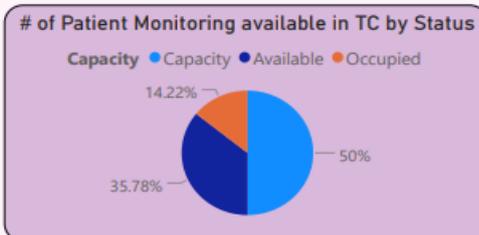
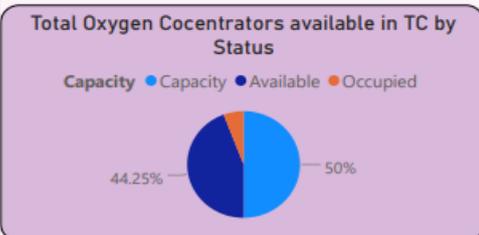
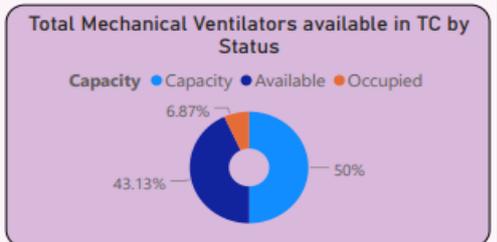
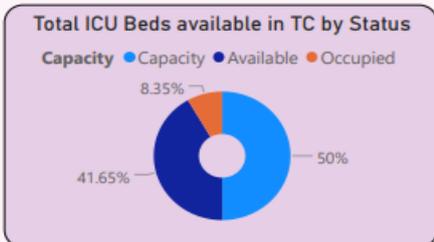
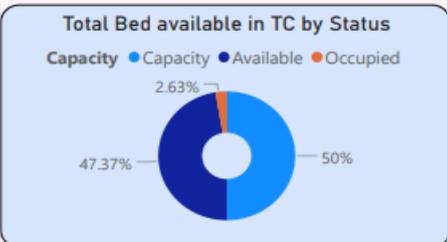
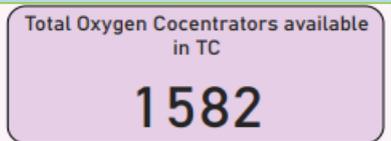
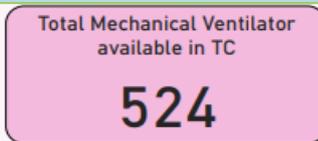
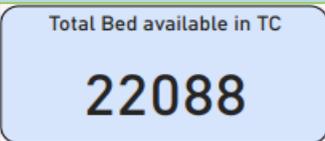
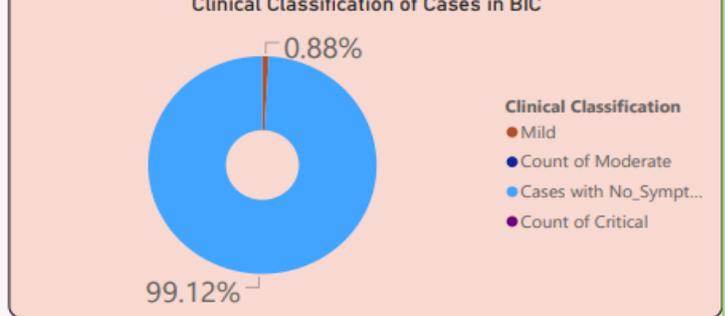
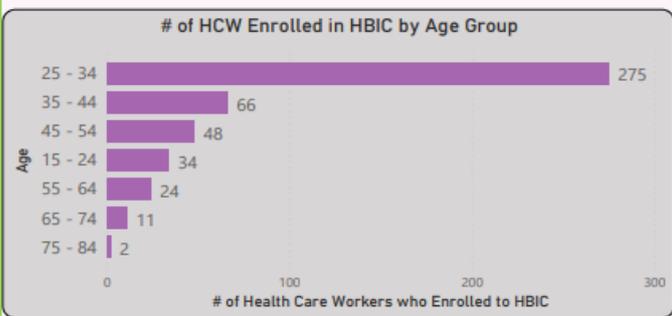
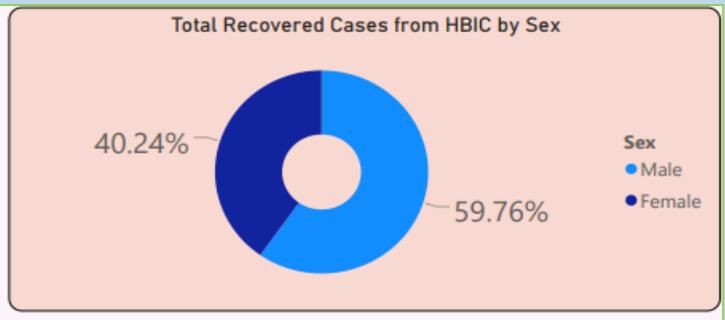
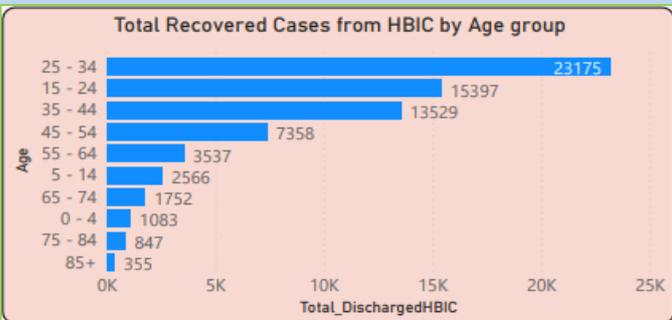
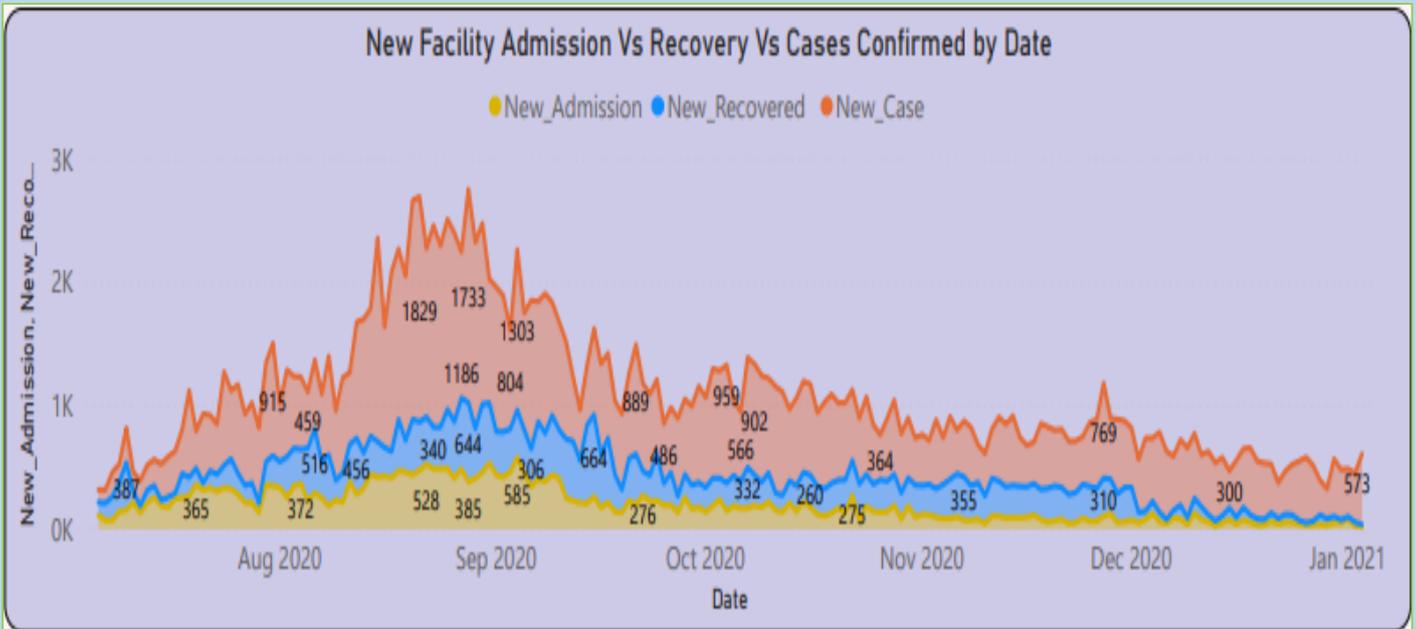
- H.E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed expressed the need to enhance COVID-19 preventive measures. “As COVID19 cases continue to surge and our intensive care units operate at maximum capacity, it is imperative that we do not lose sight of precautionary measures. Save your life; save someone else’s life and support our health workers by wearing a mask”, said the Prime Minister on his social media official page.

## V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

- There were total of 3,055 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the WHO Epi-Week-53, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 112,348.
- As of January 03, 2021:
  - Nationally, there are a total 22,088 beds in the COVID-19 treatment centers; out of which 1,054 are Intensive Care Unit beds.
  - A total of 25,072 suspected COVID-19 cases are admitted to isolation centers. Of these, 258 suspected cases are admitted in the Epi-Week-53.
  - 22,325 (339 in the Epi-Week-53) initially suspected cases are discharged after laboratory test became negative.
- Among the currently existing COVID-19 cases, there are 239 patients in severe clinical condition.

### Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 75,802 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 69,599 (91.82%), have recovered and nine (0.012%) died.
- Of these, 2,767 cases have been enrolled to HBIC, 799 cases have recovered and two cases died in the WHO-Epi-Week-53.
- As of January 03, 2021, there are 6,394 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 562 (20 of them in the Epi-Week-53) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 326 (36 of them in Epi-Week-53) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.



**Fig. 10: Summary of COVID-19 case management and facility readiness in Ethiopia, as of January 03, 2021.**

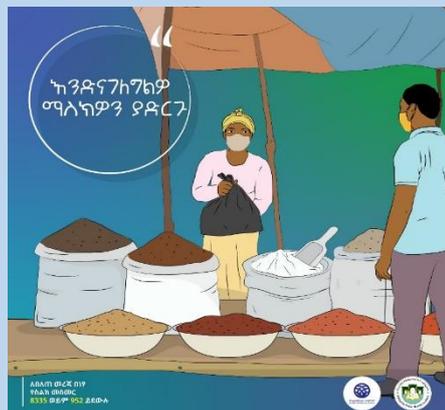
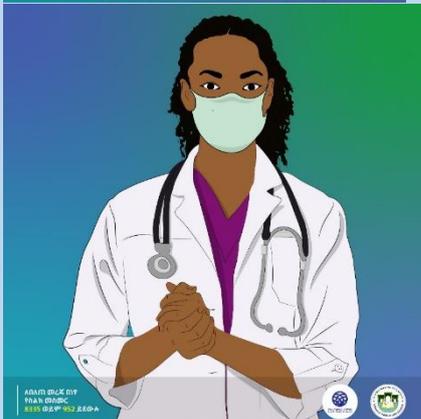
## VI. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Daily press statement is being given on COVID-19 situation on daily basis through Mass Media.
- Eight mobile SMS Messages were prepared and sent to Ethio-telecom for sending to all mobile users.
- The Ethiopian Institute of Public Health had a consultative meeting on face mask utilization with Artists from professional associations. The consultative meeting was conducted under the motto “NO MASK NO SERVICE” to prevent and control the transmission of COVID-19. It was mentioned at the meeting that Artists have done a lot of work regarding public awareness creation on COVID-19 prevention and control and much more will be expected from artists in the future.



**Fig.11: Consultative meeting with artists from professional associations on enhancing COVID-19 public awareness creation, Jan. 2, 2021.**

- COVID-19 related key messages and updates shared on social media.



- Alert letter on COVID-19 and other public health emergencies disseminated to all regional and city administration health bureaus.

## VII. Logistic and Supplies

- There is ongoing distribution of PPE, Viral Transport Media (VTM), swabs, pharmaceuticals and other medical supplies to isolation and treatment centers.
- Weekly stock status analysis report (Stock on hand, procurement, stock on pipeline, distribution update) was performed by incorporating the regional stock reports and laboratory commodity procurement was followed and monitored.
- 'Save the Children Ethiopia' has donated 505 tablets to the Ministry of Health to support the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control to update the health information system and service delivery. Attending the handover ceremony, State Minister of Health, Dr. Dereje Dhuguma, thanked 'Save the Children Ethiopia' for its support in modernizing the information management system and communicating the communication system. Ekin Ogutogullari, Country Director of Save the Children, on his part said the support will play an important role in the efforts to prevent the outbreak of COVID-19 nationwide.



**Fig. 12: Save the Children Ethiopia donating tablets to Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Ethiopia, Dec. 30, 2020**

## VIII. Challenges and Way Forward

### Challenges

- Weak public adherence to the public health and social preventive measures.
- Shortage of case management facilities for the critical cases.
- Increasing number of COVID-19 cases in congregated settings.
- Increasing number of cases being detected in the community.
- Happenings of super spreading events-Mass gatherings with poor physical distancing and facemask use which exacerbates the spread of COVID-19.
- Low stock status of personal protective equipment is still a problem.

## Way Forward

- 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 essential health services other than COVID-19.

## IX. COVID-19 Related News:

- Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine offers protection against new variants, study suggests:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2021/jan/08/uk-coronavirus-live-covid-lockdown-vaccine-south-africa-variant-latest-updates>
- CDC says severe allergic reactions to coronavirus vaccine are rare:  
<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/01/06/health/covid-vaccines-cdc-allergic-safety-wellness/index.html>
- Blood Plasma Reduces Risk of Severe Covid-19 if Given Early:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/06/health/convalescent-plasma-covid.html?auth=linked-facebook>
- Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine likely effective against UK mutation:  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/tag/coronavirus-pandemic/>
- 'Better late than sorry': Sweden introduces masks on public transport:  
<https://www.euronews.com/2021/01/07/better-late-than-sorry-sweden-introduces-masks-on-public-transport>
- Grammy Awards delayed to March due to COVID-19 pandemic conditions:  
<https://www.euronews.com/2021/01/06/grammy-awards-delayed-to-march-due-to-covid-19-pandemic-conditions>
- Germany extends coronavirus lockdown for three more weeks:  
<https://www.euronews.com/2021/01/05/germany-extends-coronavirus-lockdown-for-three-more-weeks>

## 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:
  - Properly isolate from other family members.
  - Take full responsibility in prevention of transmission
  - 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.

### Health Evidence summary

Articles/Comment/ Correspondence/ Editorials	Summary
<p>Mortality in hospitalized patients with cancer and coronavirus disease 2019: A systematic review and meta-analysis of cohort studies</p> <p><a href="https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.33386">https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.33386</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A systematic review was performed to identify studies that reported mortality and characteristics of patients with cancer who were diagnosed with COVID-19.</li> <li>• Among 2922 patients from 13 primarily inpatient studies of individuals with COVID-19 and cancer, the pooled 30-day mortality rate was 30% (95% CI, 25%-35%). The overall pooled 30-day mortality rate among 624.</li> <li>• Pooled mortality estimates for hospitalized patients with cancer and COVID-19 remain high at 30%, with significant heterogeneity across studies.</li> <li>• Dedicated community-based studies are needed in the future to help assess overall COVID-19 mortality among the broader population of patients with cancer.</li> </ul>
<p>Urgent dental care on a national level during the COVID-19 epidemic.</p> <p><a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/research/coronavirus/publication/33377282">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/research/coronavirus/publication/33377282</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This paper aims to report and discuss the organization and statistics of dental care during the COVID-19 epidemics on the national level in Slovenia.</li> <li>• The reorganization and centralization of dental care proved to be an efficient model in Slovenia for the provision of urgent dental care, and the management of the healthcare workforce and PPE.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data from this study may provide helpful information for planning the needs and corresponding resources for the next waves of epidemics of COVID-19.</li> </ul>
<p>Experiences of telemedicine in neurological out-patient clinics during the COVID-19 pandemic</p> <p><a href="https://doi.org/10.1002/acn3.51293">https://doi.org/10.1002/acn3.51293</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The main objective of this survey was to investigate the initial experiences of neurologists with the use of telemedicine for different neurological conditions during the first phase of the COVID-19.</li> <li>All hospital-based neurologists in Norway (n = 400) were invited to a questionnaire survey by e-mail in April 2020.</li> <li>Telemedicine was rapidly implemented in Norwegian neurological departments during the first weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teleconsultations were better suited for follow-ups than for new referrals, and better for headache and epilepsy patients as compared to multiple sclerosis and movement disorder patients.</li> </ul>
<p>Impact of COVID-19 public health restrictions on older people in Uganda: 'Hunger is really one of those problems brought by this COVID'</p> <p><a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610220004081">https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610220004081</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This research was done with the aim to explore the impact of COVID-19 public health restrictions on older people in Uganda</li> <li>It was a qualitative semi-structured interview study which was conducted at participants homes who were older adults living in Uganda (aged 60+)</li> <li>Public health restrictions have a severe impact on not only older adults, but the whole family in Uganda.</li> <li>Governmental strategies to contain the virus need to provide more support to enable people to get necessities and live as normal a life as possible.</li> </ul>
<p>Assessment of Air Contamination by SARS-CoV-2 in Hospital Settings</p> <p><a href="http://jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?doi=10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.33232">http://jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?doi=10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.33232</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective of this research was to review current evidence on air contamination with SARS-CoV-2 in hospital settings and the factors associated with contamination, including viral load and particle size.</li> <li>In this study, the air close to and distant from patients with coronavirus disease 2019 was contaminated with SARS-CoV-2 RNA; however, few of these samples contained viable viruses.</li> <li>High viral loads found in bathrooms, staff areas, and public hallways suggest that these areas should be carefully considered.</li> </ul>

### COVID-19 updates and sources of evidence:

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

**8335 / 952**



**Call-Centers**  
**FOR MORE INFO and**  
**ALERT NOTIFICATION on**  
**COVID-19**



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.

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**PREPARED BY**

Fantu Lombamo (MD, MPH) – Planning Section, Situation Unit Lead  
Negusse Yohannes (PhD in Statistics) – Planning Section, Situation Unit Member

**EDITED AND REVIEWED BY**

Shambel Habebe (MPH-Field Epi) - Planning Section Chief  
Zewdu Assefa (MPH- Field Epi) - Deputy Incident Manager  
Aschalew Abayneh (RN, BSc, MPH) - DDG-EPHI, Incident Manager

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**Web:** [www.ephi.gov.et](http://www.ephi.gov.et)

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**Call:** 8335/952 (TOLL FREE LINE) or 011 276 5340

**Email:** [ephieoc@gmail.com](mailto:ephieoc@gmail.com) or [pheodatacenter@gmail.com](mailto:pheodatacenter@gmail.com)