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## **Senamoksh Clinic Featured in the Lancet**

By Mammo Muchie

The Ee-JRIF shall introduce networks related to health, education, infrastructure, technologies, improvements related to water, land, forestry, environment and related themes vital for the creation of well being and transformation of Ethiopian society. For this first issue we have selected the Senamoksh clinic.

The editors of the Lancet introduced at the World Conference on Health Research Systems in Bamako, Mali in 2008 the Senamoksh clinic as one of the model clinics for transferring medical knowledge and know-how from Sweden to Ethiopia. (see W.Wakabi, Research Collaboration Boosts Women's Health in Ethiopia, The Lancet, Vol.372, issue 9649, November 1 2008, November 7,2008,p.1534).

The co-founder of a modern gynecological clinic in Sweden accumulated experience and knowledge to translate and set up a model clinic in Addis Ababa in 2006. The purpose is to make sure the model clinic in Addis Ababa has the latest techniques and methods of treatment as well as Sweden.

In fact in low income contexts, the problems are more intractable and require more concentrated and focused efforts. The health problems are compounded with other diseases such as HIV, cervical cancer, fistula and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases). Recent studies of the IARC/WHO confirm that among the women population of low income countries, East Africa has the highest incidence and morbidity rate (80%) of cervical cancer. Research by the Ethiopian Medical Faculty or Black Lion Hospital confirms that Ethiopian Women face the hazard of an increasing rate of cervical cancer incidence and morbidity. What is worrisome is the continuation of risky behaviors for lack of information and lack of access by women to the relevant and timely awareness regarding knowing or learning about necessary health information and services.

Senamoksh clinic specializes in health promotion and disease prevention amongst Ethiopian women. The clinic's primary goal is to screen for cervical cancer and treat the

pre-invasive lesions. In addition the clinic provides services on the following: providing general medicine, screening women for breast cancer, helping women in pre and post menopause situations, treating infertile couples and providing dermatological and pediatric medical care.

Senamoks clinic also provides laboratory services, local clinics with information and education, research and scientific exchange and communication.

The founder and director of Senamoksh clinic, Dr. Meseret Mengistu, who is also an editorial board member of Ee-JRIF says her vision started from her childhood dream to set up a clinic to make Ethiopian women robust and healthy. This is how she expressed her vision: “The idea of my starting a clinic for Ethiopian women originated from my childhood dream. I then visualized myself as a medical doctor dedicated for helping my country women in their health problems. Whilst studying medicine, my dream took shape and I specialized in gynecology and obstetrics. Ever since I have relished a challenge to try to achieve whatever would be achievable.... With the start of this new clinic I believe that my dream has come true, as I am now in a position to help Ethiopian women in their health problems.”

Though Dr. Meseret lives in Sweden, she has been able to fulfill her childhood dream to help make Ethiopian women healthy in spite of the fact she is not living in Ethiopia. This example shows that distance, separation and living abroad as a Diaspora will not hinder the will to do a few focused things by all Ethiopians who find themselves distributed across the whole world today.

What Makes Senamoksh Clinic a Model?

Senaoksh clinic integrates prevention with curative care. It combines research with education, public awareness and the diffusion of knowledge and health information.

The future direction for the model clinic is: 1. The first is providing treatment to those who cannot pay and those who can pay. Twice a week those who cannot pay can get treatment on a first come served basis. Those who can afford get treatment all week. 2. The second is the provision of information for preventive care to all and the diffusion of

this vital information. 3 The third is the provision of scientific information and statistics through accessible and relevant communication channels based on sound research.

Activities Undertaken to date The clinic started in 2006. It was officially opened in 2008. There was a workshop organized by Senamoksh, ESOG and the University in Addis Ababa where local scientists met international scientists. The workshop highlighted the value of treatment, prevention and knowledge dissemination. Larger issues such as poverty, problems of infertile couples and the possibility of creating more functions to the model clinic were addressed in the workshop. Famous scientists such as Outi Hovatta attended and gave lectures in the country, a spillover knowledge effect from the workshop and the clinic.

#### Concluding Remark

Senamoksh women's health clinic is growing and is evolving. There is an objective to set up an IVF unit with the support of world renowned and leading experts in the field.

Once the clinic is self-running the goal is to extend this into other parts of the country and even to the rest of Africa. Replicating and learning from successes and failures will be used to promote this vital venture in promoting women's health in Ethiopia.