



NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

WEEKLY BULLETIN

WHO Epi-Week- 04 (January 25 – 31, 2021)

BULLETIN No: 40

Issue Date: February 13, 2021

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 42,889 laboratory samples were tested in the WHO-Epi-Week-04, 2021.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the WHO-Epi-Week-04, is 9.05%, which is higher than that of the preceding week (7.87%).
- A total of 3,883 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 27 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the WHO Epi-Week-04 bringing the total cases and death to 137,650 and 2,093 respectively.
- A total of 84,780 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 3,412 of these are enrolled in the WHO-Epi-Week-04.
- Out of total of 317,643 contacts of COVID-19 confirmed cases, 1,122 contacts were identified during the WHO Epi-week-04.
- Ethiopia has launched schools rally to promote public health and social measures to fight COVID-19.
- The Ethiopian Public Health Institute's Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM) has conducted its six months performance review including COVID-19 response performance.



EPHI PHEM six months performance review, Jan. 30 – 31, 2021, Hawassa, Ethiopia

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.

II. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

Global Situation

- The total number of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths due to COVID-19 globally surpassed 100 million and 2 million respectively.
- Between December 31, 2019 and January 31, 2021, COVID-19 pandemic affected 235 countries/territories causing 100,847,587 cases and 2,199,905 deaths (CFR=2.18%) globally.
- Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 3,564,632 cases and 93,058 deaths were reported during the WHO Epi-Week-04 of the year 2021.
- The United States of America (USA) reported the highest number of cases (25,676,612) with CFR of 1.69% followed by India (10,746,183) cases) with a CFR of 1.44%.
- In Africa, 57 countries/territories have reported COVID-19 cases.
- As of January 31, 2021, a total of 3,567,703 cases and 90,352 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.53%). Of these 135,531 cases and 5,793 deaths were reported during the WHO-Epi-Week-04.
- In Africa, South Africa reported the highest number of cases (1,449,236) with CFR of 3.03% followed by Morocco (470,691 cases) with a CFR of 1.75%.
- Ethiopia reported the highest number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in East Africa. See the summary dashboard below.

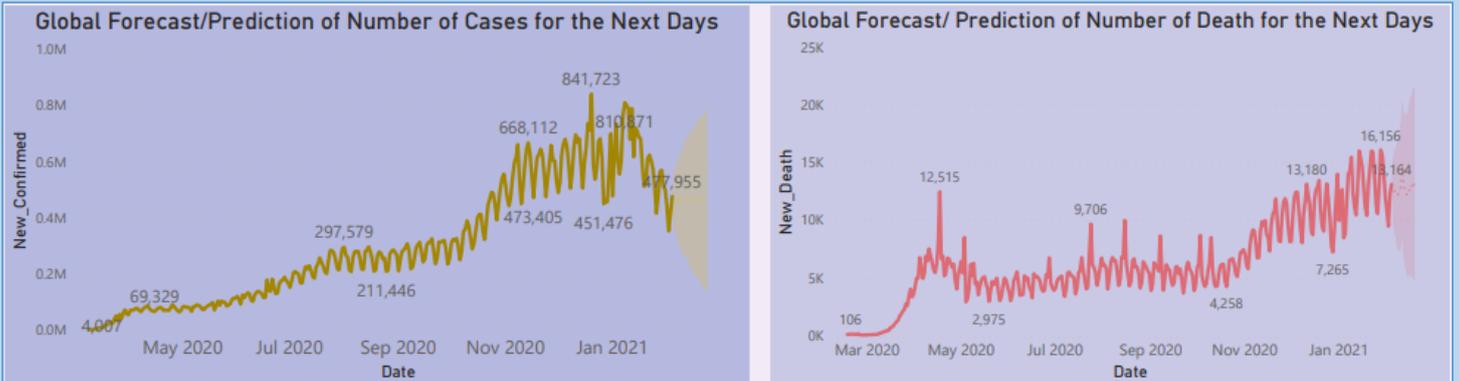
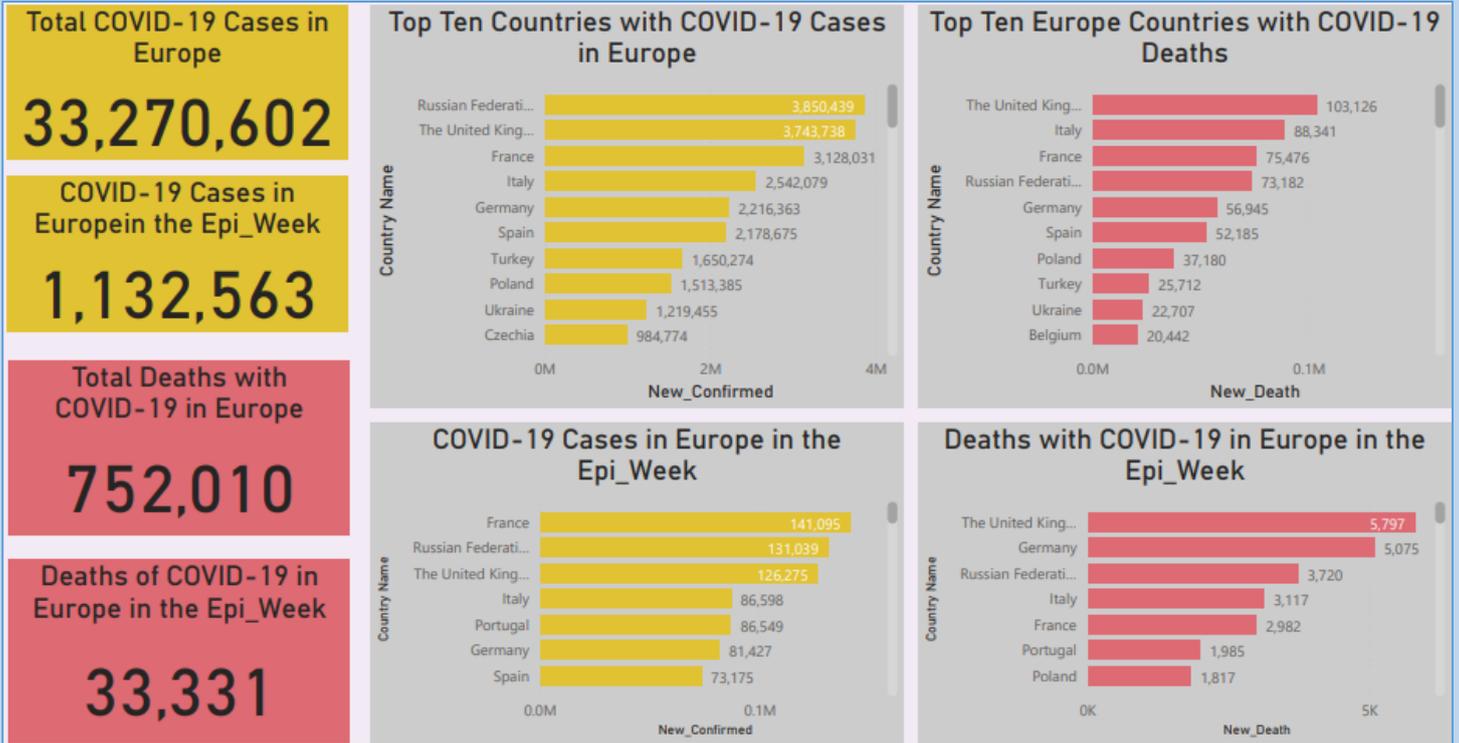
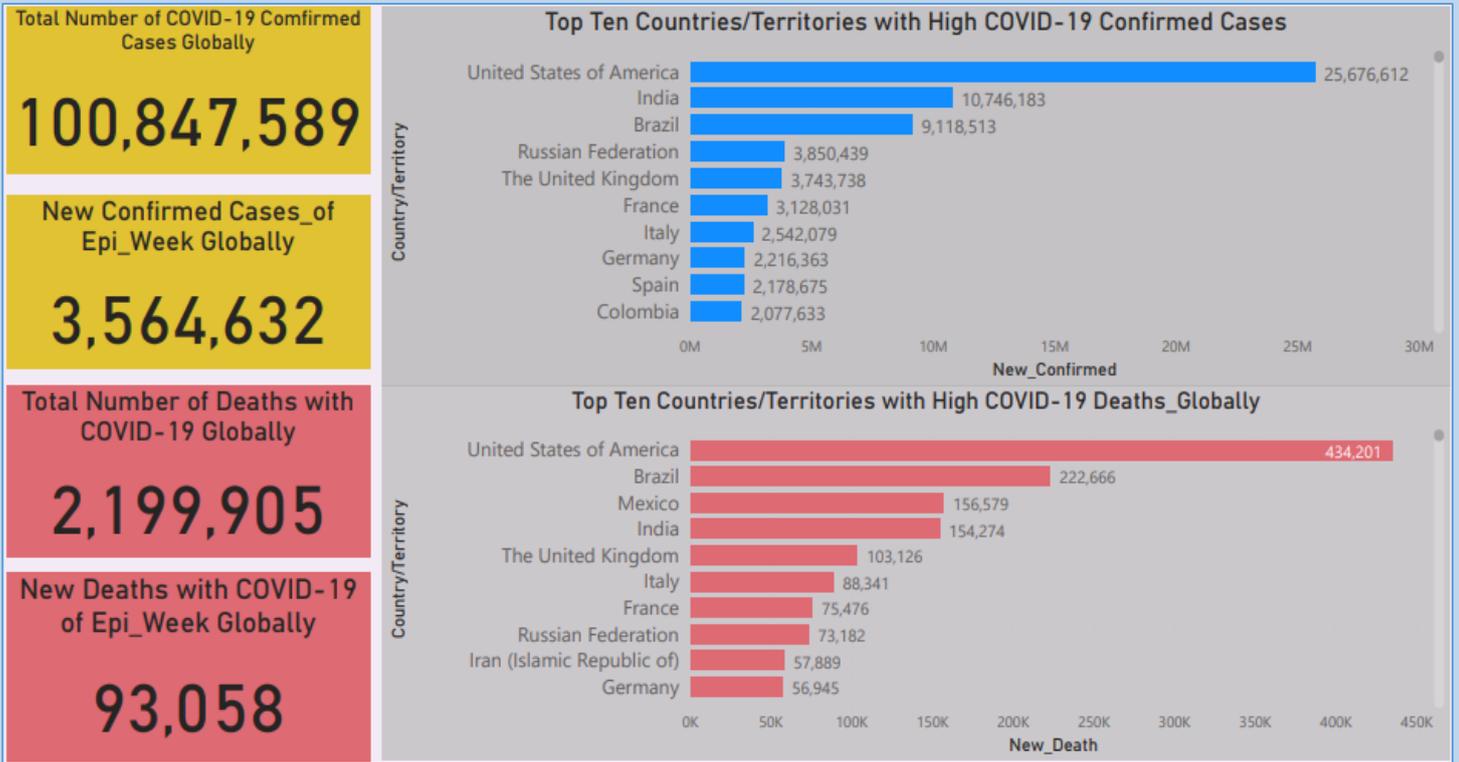


Fig. 1: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of January 31, 2021 (Source: WHO)

of African Countries/Territories with COVID-19 Confirmed Cases

57

Total Number of Cases Confirmed in Africa

3,567,703

New Confirmed Cases in Africa with COVID-19_of Epi_Week

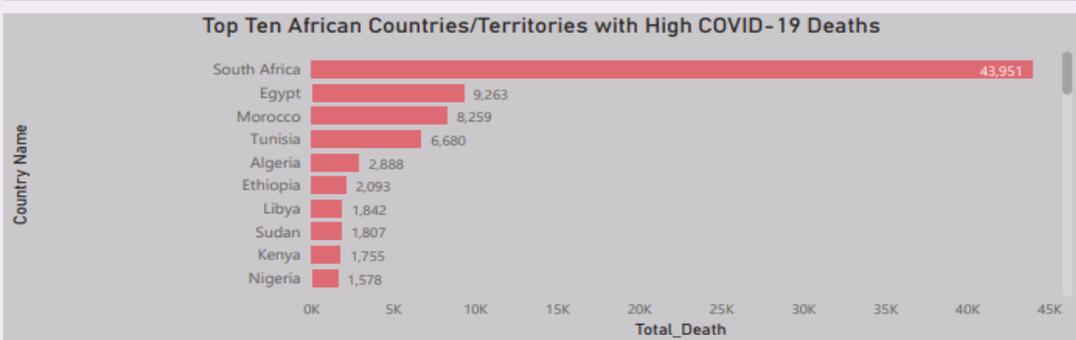
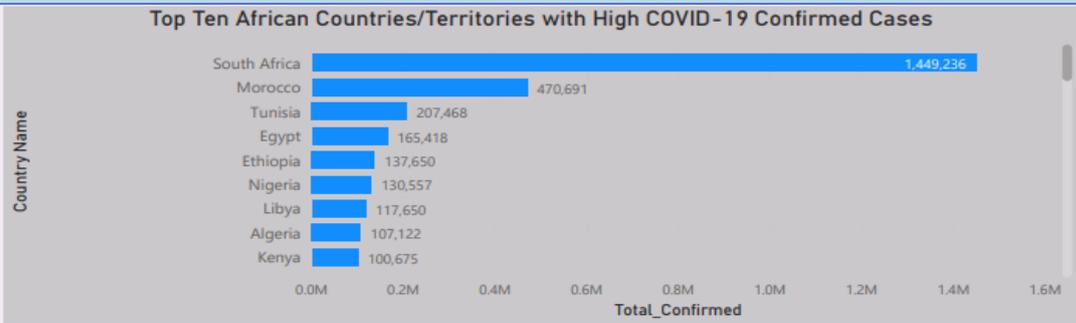
135,531

Total Number of Deaths in Africa with COVID-19

90,352

New Deaths in Africa with COVID-19_in Epi_Week

5,793

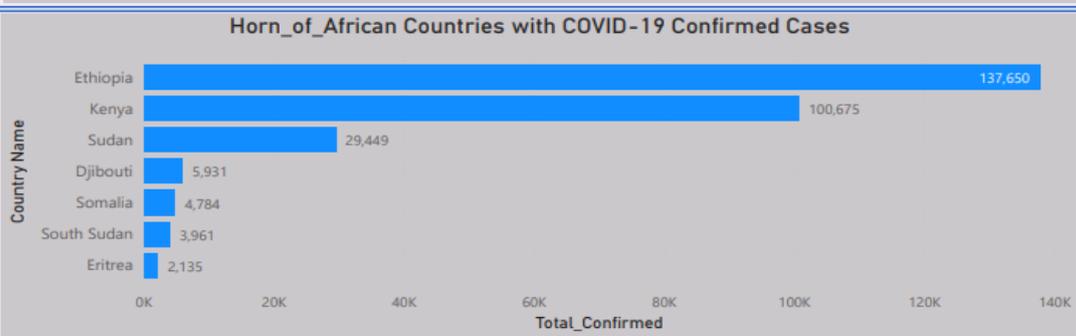


Total Number of Cases Confirmed in Horn_Africa

278,939

New Cases in Horn_Africa_in Epi_Week

5,562



Total Number of Deaths in Horn_Africa with COVID-19

5,653

New Deaths in Horn_Africa with COVID-19 in Epi_Week

110

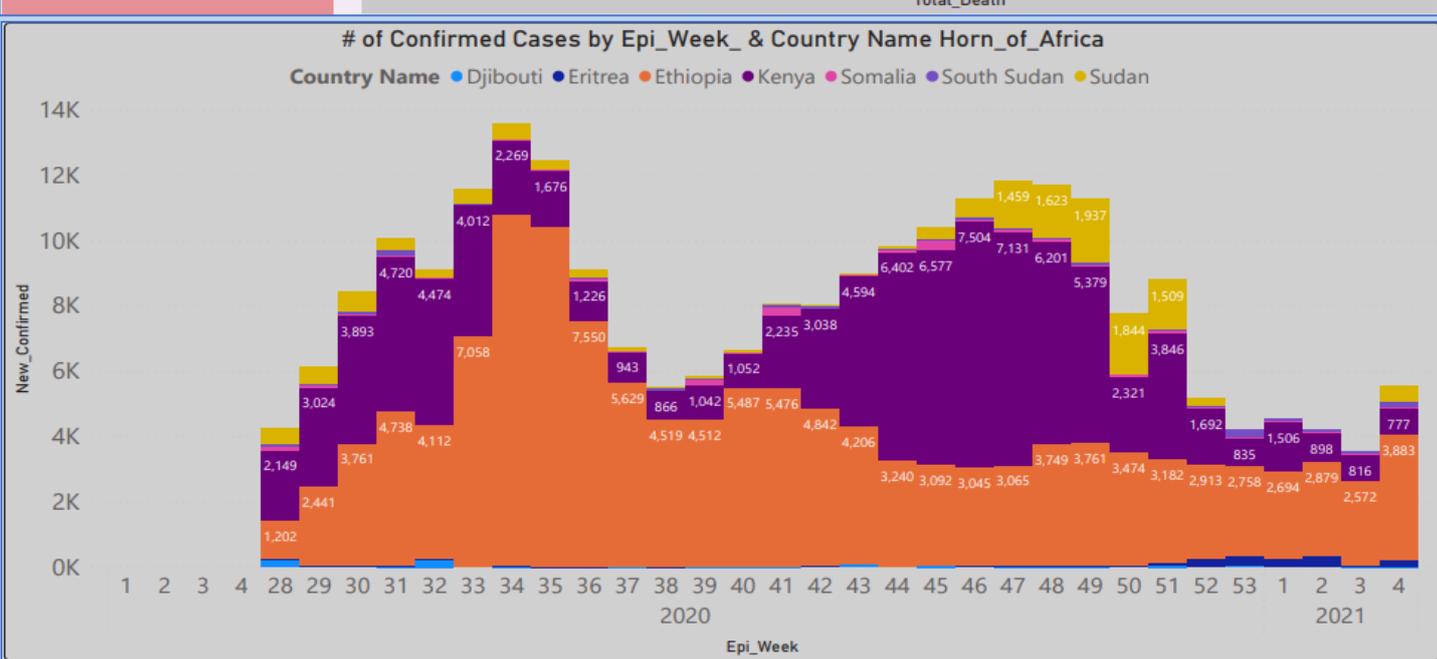
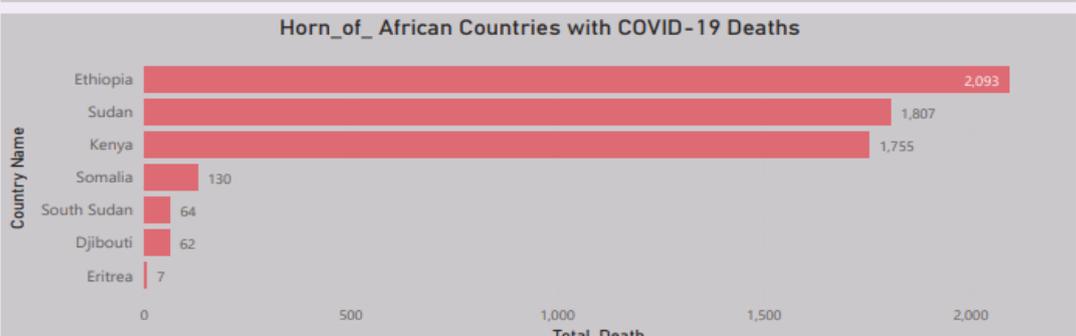


Fig. 2: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of January 31, 2021 (Source: WHO)

National COVID-19 situation:

- Three-thousand-eight-hundred-eighty-three (3,883) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases (51% increase compared to that of Epi-Week-03) and 27 COVID-19 related deaths (25% decrease compared to that of Epi-Week-03) were reported during the WHO Epi-Week-04, 2021.
- As of January 31, 2021, total of 137,650 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 2,093 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-04 of 2021

Regions	New_Tested	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New_Deaths	Positivity Rate	# of Recovery
Addis Ababa	32167	3208	243	19	10.0	2114
Oromia	4163	479	49	3	13.4	1026
SNNPR	2177	63	1	0	3.4	29
Sidama	1142	46	2	1	3.7	24
Afar	1133	12	0	0	1.1	10
Amhara	960	48	12	4	7.6	1
Dire Dawa	408	14	0	0	3.4	7
Benshangul	277	7	8	0	4.0	1
Gambella	160	0	0	0	0.0	0
Somali	152	0	0	0	0.0	0
Harari	150	6	0	0	3.4	0
Tigray	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Total	42889	3883	315	27	4.2	3212

**** Positivity Rate is the Weighted Averages of Regional Distributions of Rates

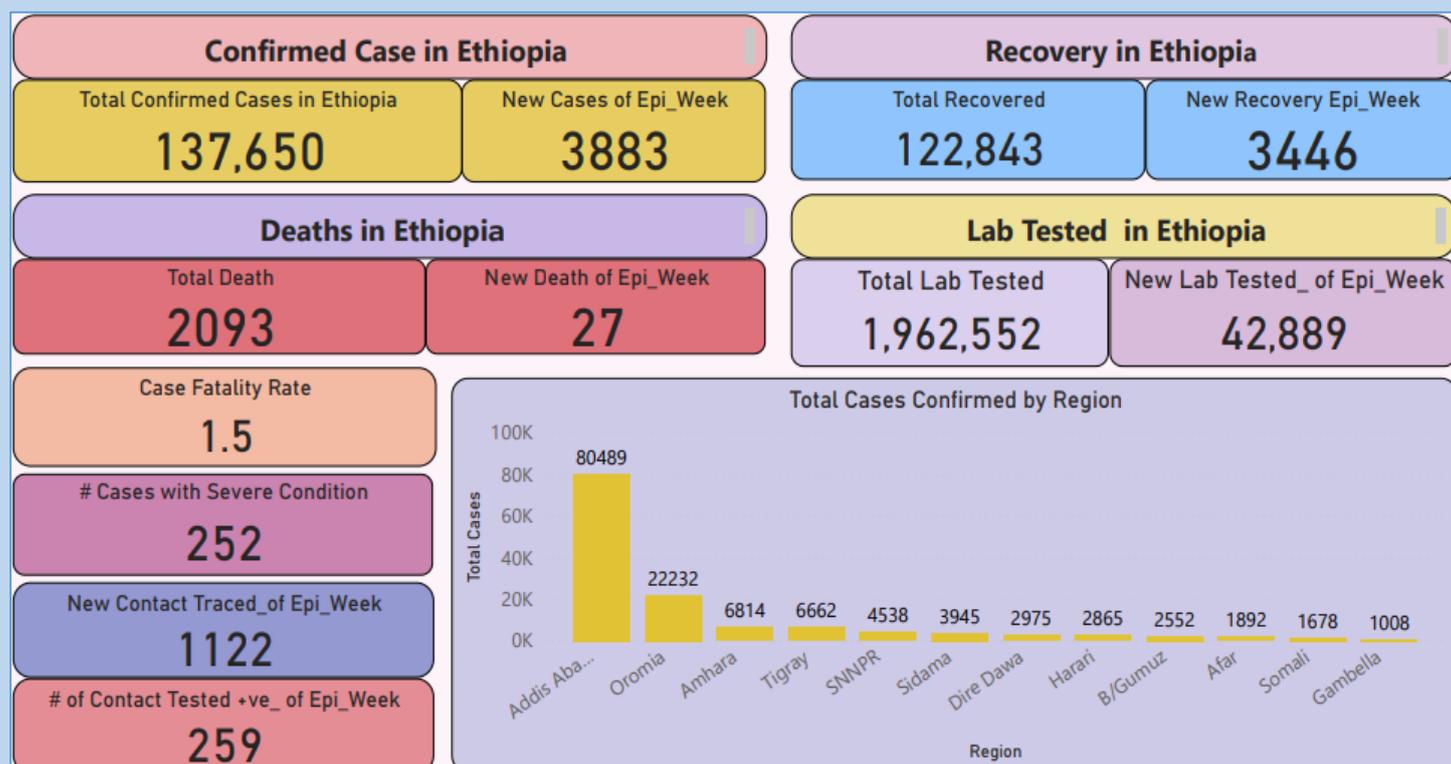


Fig. 3: Weekly summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of January 31, 2021, Ethiopia

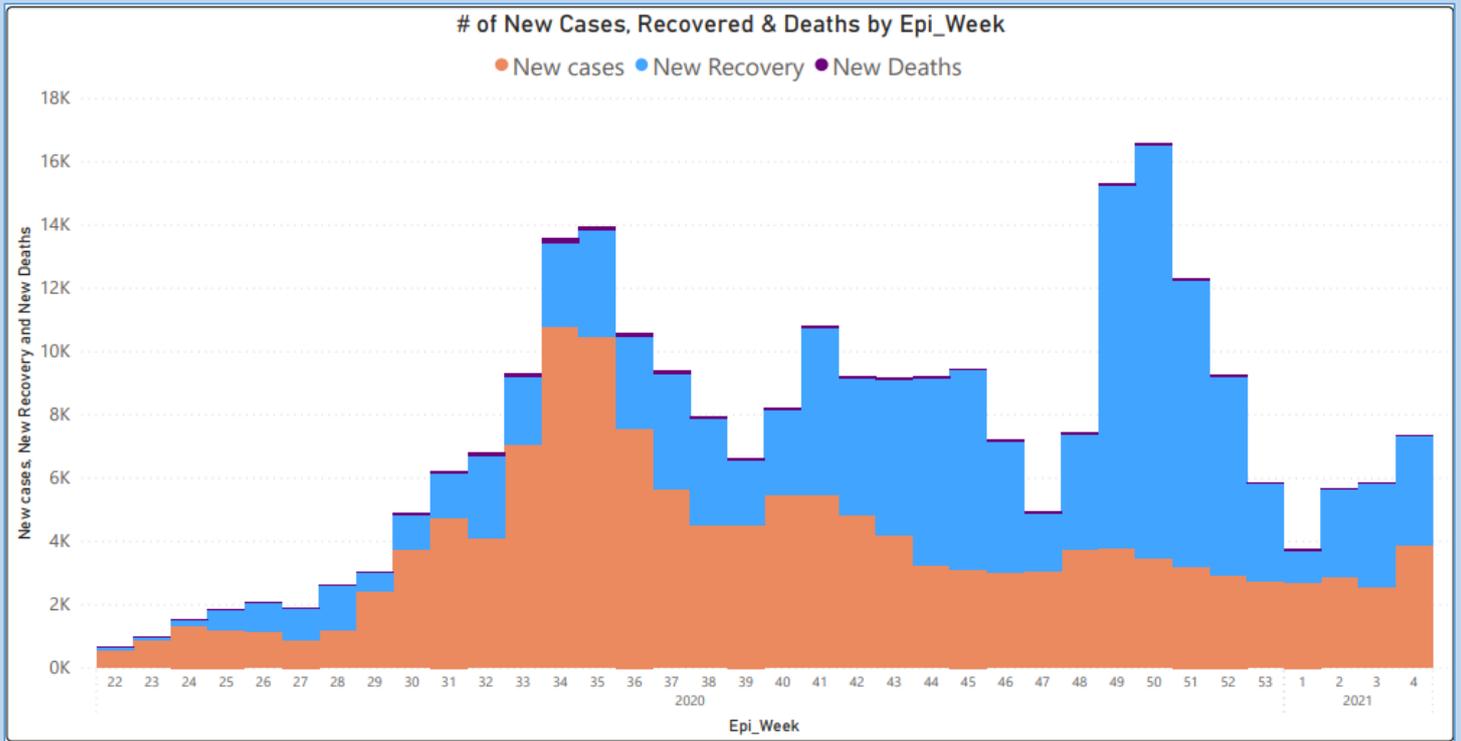


Fig. 4: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by WHO Epi-Week as of January 31, 2021, Ethiopia

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, surveillance and assessment in school and congregated setting communities.

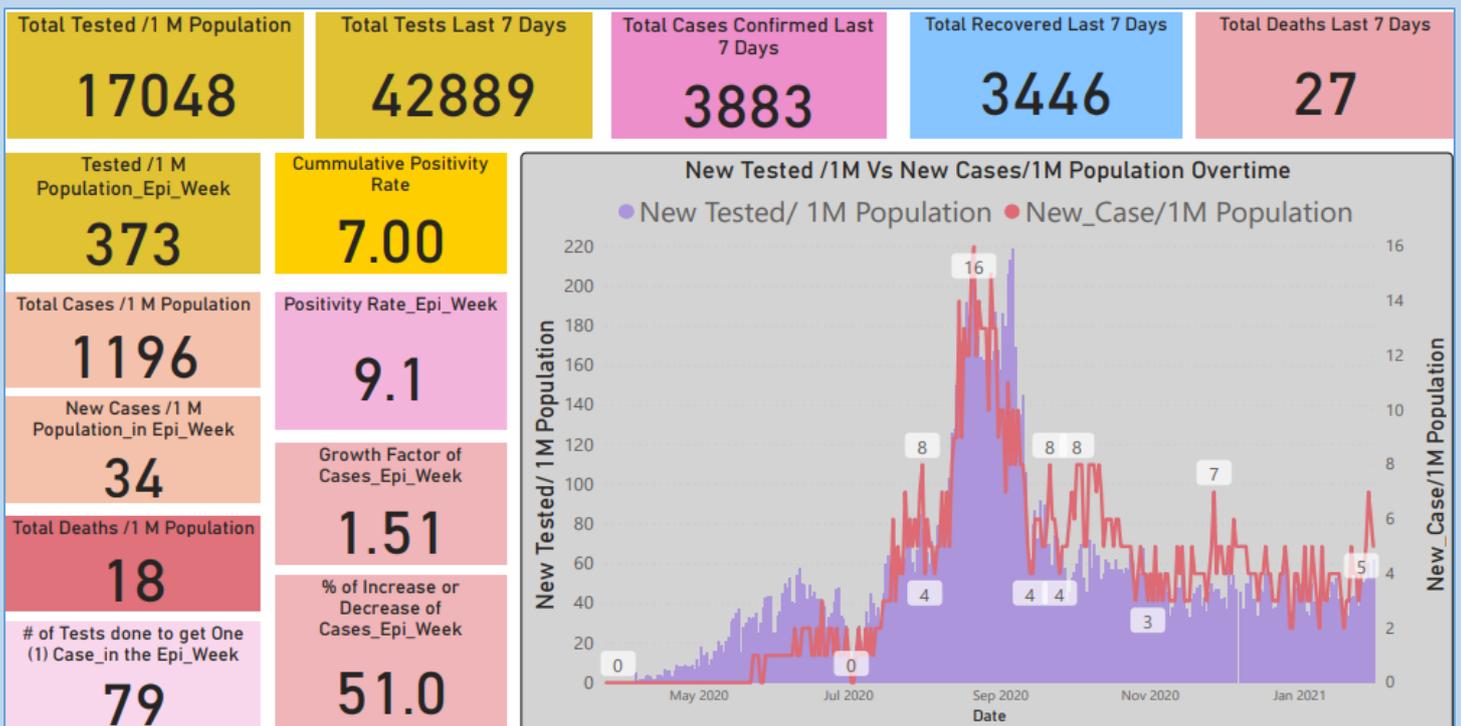


Fig. 5: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of January 31, 2021.

Contact tracing and follow-up:

- As of January 31, 2021:
 - Total of 317,643 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 1,122 contacts were identified in the WHO-Epi-Week-04.
 - Of total contacts, 289,403 (91.14%) have been completed 14 days follow-up, while 1,327 contacts are still on follow-up.
 - 716 (0.23%) contacts have developed COVID-19 suggestive symptoms. Of these symptomatic contacts, 566 (79.05%) have been tested positive.
- Overall, 27,321 (8.60%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 19.85% of the total cases.

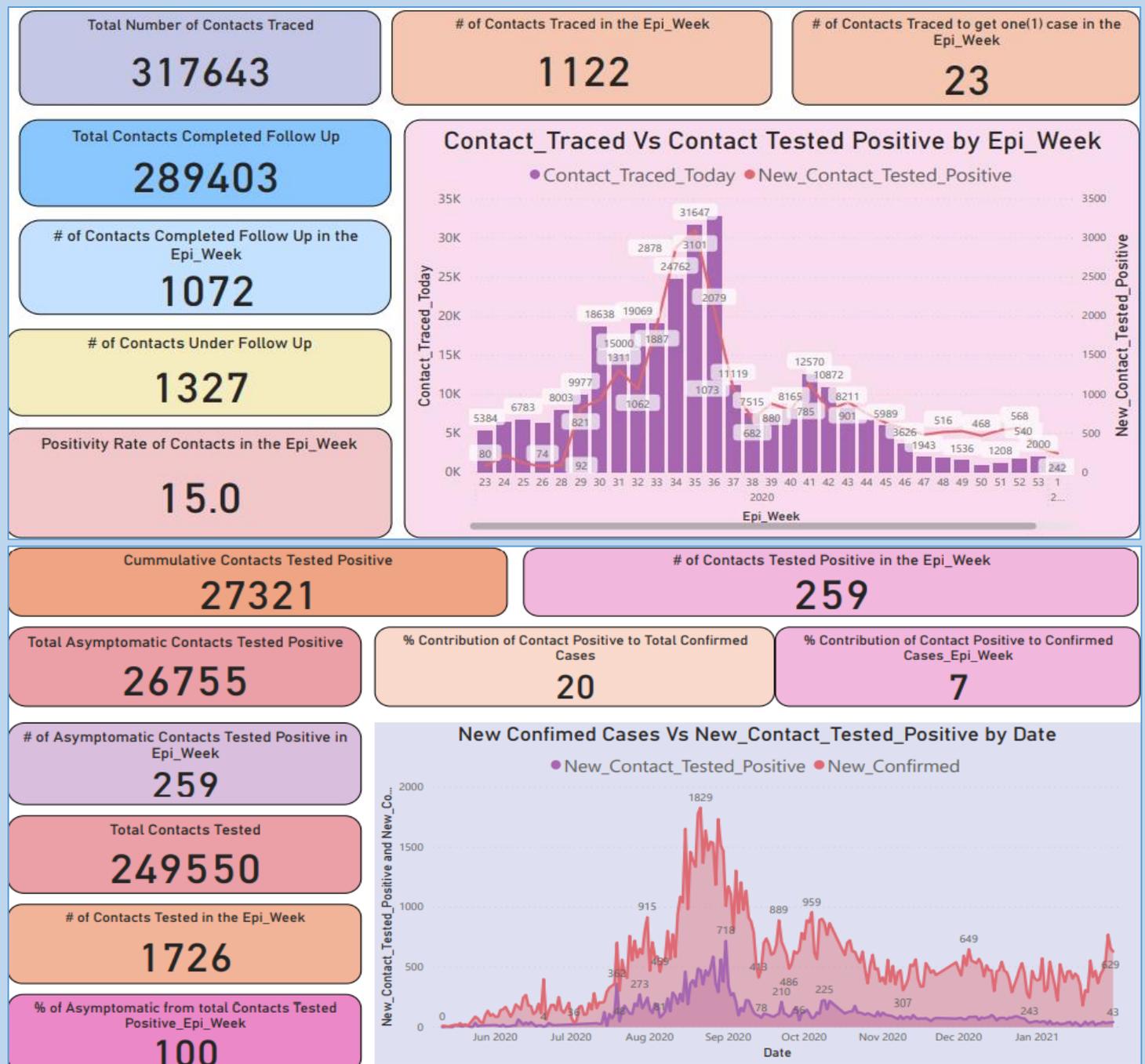


Fig. 6: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of January 31, 2021, Ethiopia.

Rumors collection and verification from all sources

- As of January 31, 2021:
 - 345,410 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 4,316 rumors were reported in the WHO-Epi-Week-04, 2021.
 - 261,086 (75.58%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.

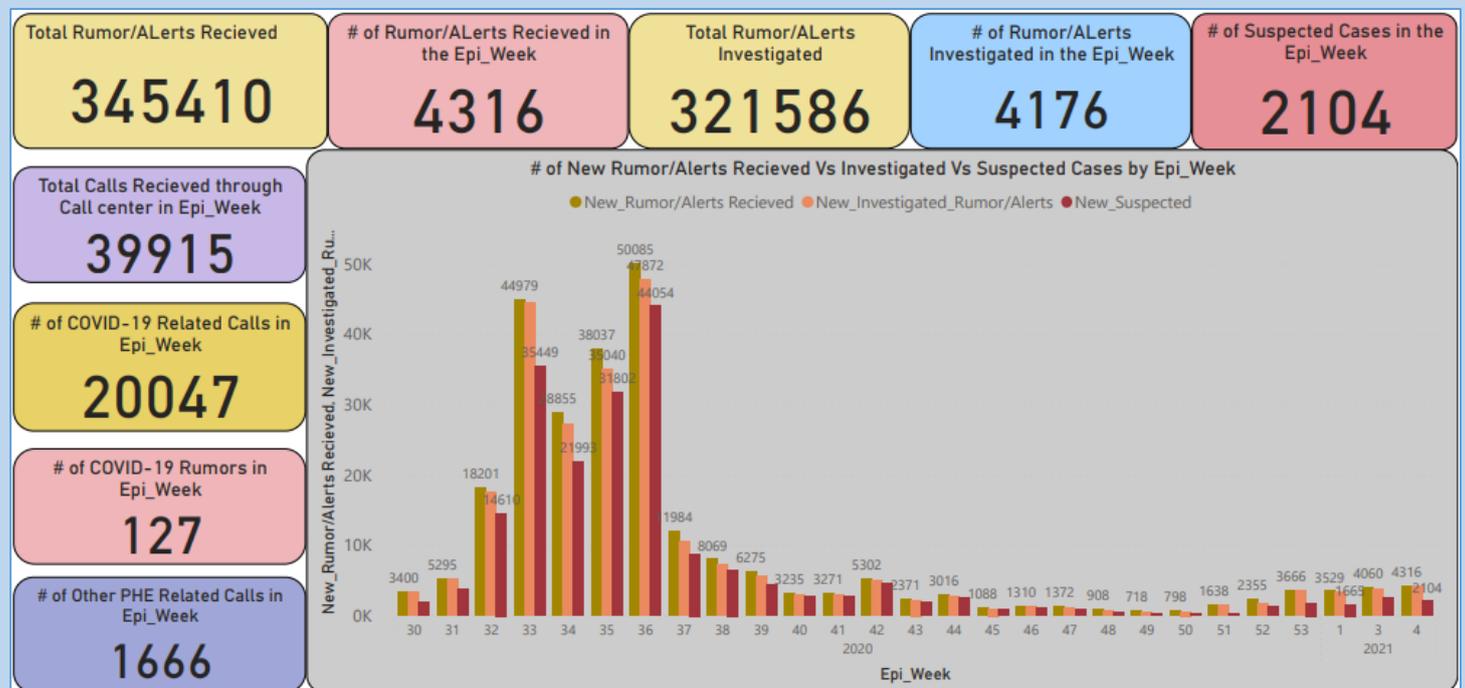


Fig. 7: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of January 31, 2021, Ethiopia.

Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 1,633,051 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 591,058 (36.19%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 27,276 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-04, 2021.
- As of January 31, 2021, among the passengers coming with COVID-19 PCR test result certificates, 185,227 passengers had PCR negative certificates while 51 passengers with PCR positive certificates were identified during health screening.

Laboratory related activities

- As of 31 January 2021, a total of 1,962,552 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 42,889 laboratory tests were processed during the WHO Epi-Week-04.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the WHO-Epi-Week-04 is 9.05%, which is higher than that of the preceding week (7.87%).
- The overall positivity rate for the laboratory test since the occurrence of the disease in the country is 7.01%.

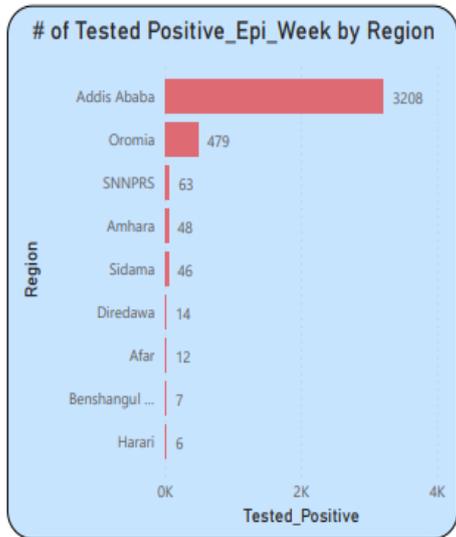
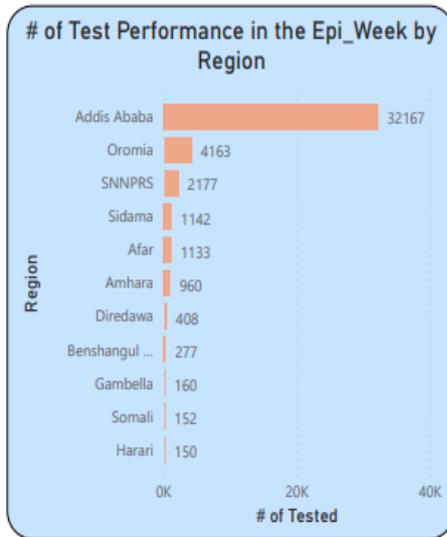
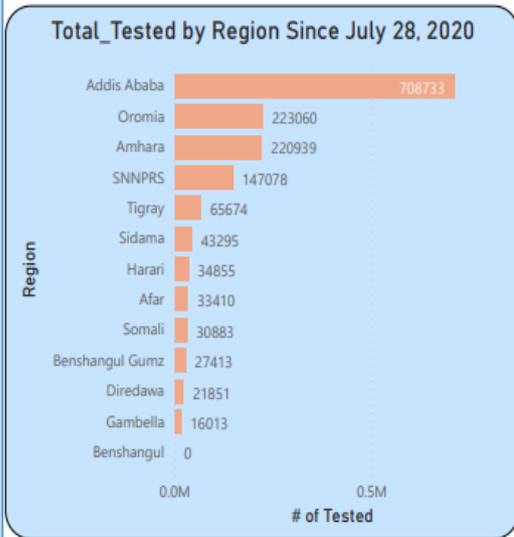
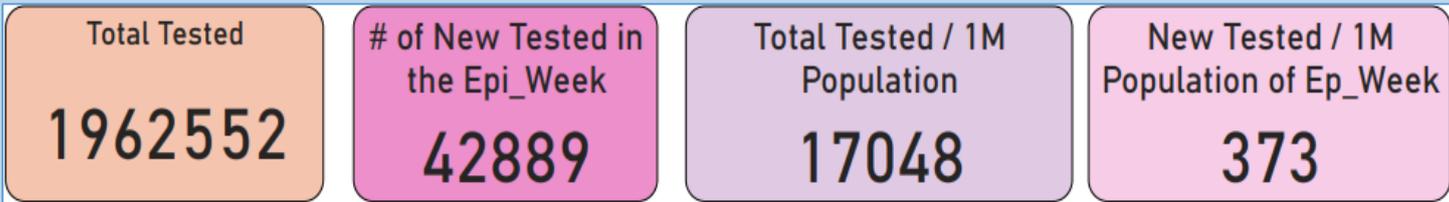
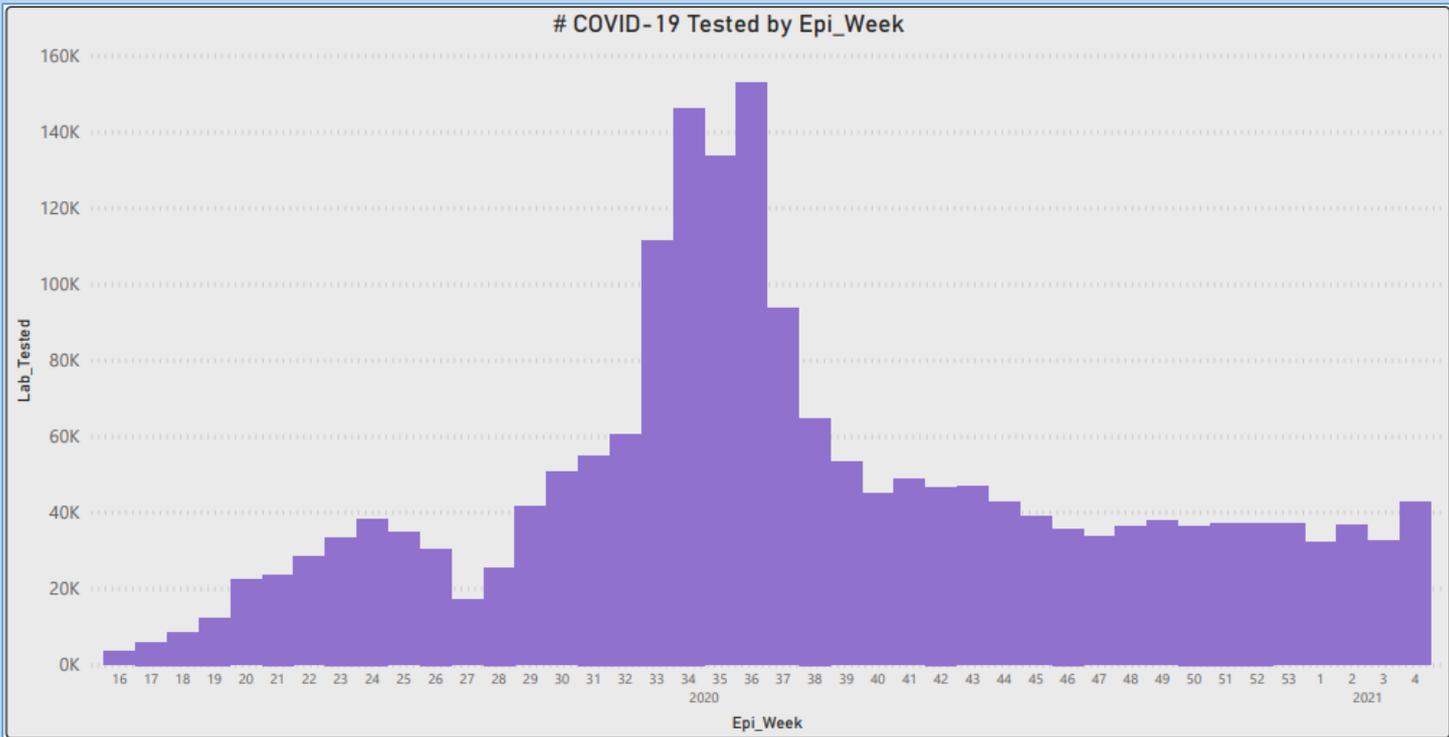


Fig. 8: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of January 31, 2021, Ethiopia.

III. 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.
- Ethiopia launching school rally to promote public health and social measures in schools nationwide amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. "No Mask No Service in Schools," is aimed at boosting awareness of wearing masks to fight the virus in schools across the country, the ministry said in a statement. According to HE Dr. Eng. Getahun Mekuria, Ethiopia's Minister of Education, and HE Dr. Lia Tadesse, Minister of Health, the upcoming nationwide initiative, which will be held early next week, also seeks to recruit teachers and students as "Mask Bearer Ambassadors" to promote mask wearing in their communities. Last October, the Ethiopian government distributed about 50 million face masks to about 46,000 schools across the country as classes resumed after months of closure.



Fig. 9: Media Release of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education on “No mask No Service in Schools”, Jan. 26, 2021

- It has been one year since the National Public Health Emergency Operations Center (PHEOC) is activated for COVID-19 pandemic preparedness and response. In this regard, the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) acknowledges the works done by the COVID-19 response staffs at the PHEOC and all levels. Mr. Aschalew Abayneh, Deputy Director General of the EPHI and Incident Manager of the COVID-19 Response; Mr. Zewdu Assefa, Deputy Incident Manager of COVID-19 Response, and other team coordinators attended the program of the acknowledgement of the responders. In his message, Mr. Aschalew Abayneh said that hard work has saved many lives and that we have been able to reduce the impact by working together.

- The Ethiopian Public Health Institute's Public Health Emergency Management (PHEM) has conducted its six months performance review. In his opening remarks, Mr. Aschalew Abayneh, Deputy Director General of the Institute, said that the main purpose of the review meeting is to learn from each other and learn from the challenges we have faced. On behalf of the Institute, the Deputy Director General also acknowledged all those who worked on and are working on COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control.



Fig. 10: EPHI PHEM Six Month Performance Review Meeting, Jan. 30-31, 2021, Hawassa, Ethiopia

IV. Case Management and Facility Readiness

- There were total of 3,446 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the WHO Epi-Week-04, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 122,843.
- As of January 31, 2021, 22,630 (176 in the Epi-Week-04) initially suspected cases are discharged after laboratory test became negative.
- Among the currently existing COVID-19 cases, there are 252 patients in severe clinical condition.

Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 84,780 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 79,208 (93.43%), have recovered and 11 (0.013%) died.
- Of these, 3,412 cases have been enrolled to HBIC and 3,214 cases have recovered in the WHO-Epi-Week-04.
- As of January 31, 2021, there are 5,944 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 746 (22 of them in the Epi-Week-04) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 481 (16 of them in Epi-Week-04) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.

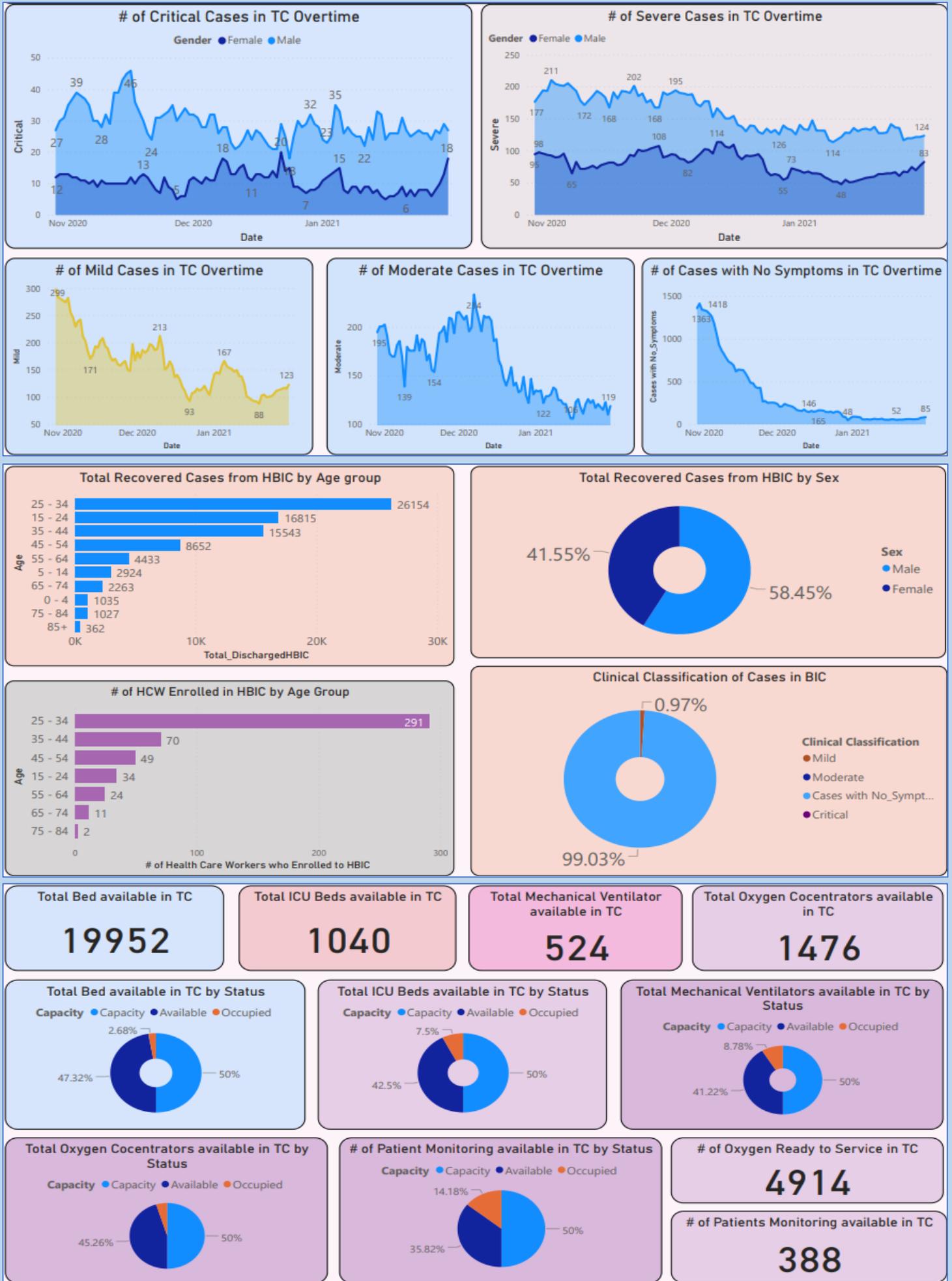


Fig. 11: Summary of COVID-19 case management and facility readiness in Ethiopia, as of January 31, 2021.

V. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Daily press statement is being given on COVID-19 situation on daily basis through Mass Media.
- Media relation with Walta, Fana, EBC and Bisrat radio was conducted on “No mask No service” movement.
- Five Key messages were developed on COVID-19 preventive measures and disseminated through the EPHI & MoH social media.
- Two mobile SMS Messages were prepared and sent to all mobile users to remind them that COVID-19 can affect any individuals at any age groups.
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was developed on the new variant and included to the communication manual of the national hot-lines centers.
- COVID-19 related key messages and updates shared on social media.

“ ከንዳናገሐገሐውን ሰዎች ማለካዎን ያድርጉ ”

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ለባለጠ መረጃ ሰነድ የሰላሳ ሰዓት 8335 ወይም 952 ይደውሉ

“ ከንዳናገሐገሐውን ሰዎች ማለካዎን ያድርጉ ”

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“ ከንዳናገሐገሐውን ሰዎች ማለካዎን ያድርጉ ”

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ለባለጠ መረጃ ሰነድ የሰላሳ ሰዓት 8335 ወይም 952 ይደውሉ

በኢትዮጵያ የኮቪድ-19 ወቅታዊ ሁኔታ

ቀን: 23-05-2013

አለታዊ	አጠቃላይ		
የላብራቶሪ ምርመራ	7,109	የላብራቶሪ ምርመራ	1,962,552
በድኑ የታመመ	252	በአሁኑ ጊዜ ቫይረሱ ያለባቸው	12,693
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ህይወታቸው ያለፈ	2	ህይወታቸው ያለፈ	2,093
በበሽታው የተያዙ	629	በበሽታው የተያዙ	137,650

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VI. 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.

VII. Challenges and Way Forward

Challenges

- Happenings of super spreading events-Mass gatherings with poor physical distancing and facemask use which exacerbates the spread of COVID-19.
- Weak public adherence to the public health and social preventive measures.
- Spreading of the misconception on the social media which creates perception traps among the community.
- Increasing number of cases being detected in the community.
- Decreased leadership engagement and reluctant sub-national structure to sustain the pandemic response coordination.
- Low stock status of personal protective equipment and laboratory consumables.

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 other essential health services besides COVID-19.

VIII. COVID-19 Related News:

- Moderna announces vaccine upgrades to protect against emerging variants: <https://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/moderna-announces-vaccine-upgrades-protect-against-emerging-variants-n1255538>
- First Covid vaccines arrive in South Africa: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2021/feb/02/coronavirus-live-news-eu-tightens-rules-for-foreign-visitors-first-covid-vaccines-arrive-in-south-africa?page=with:block-601898b98f0880635da02e79#block-601898b98f0880635da02e79>
- WHO investigators in China researching the origins of the pandemic now have months of Chinese influenza data, which may contain vital clues about the early spread of Covid-19.: <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/01/31/world/who-team-investigating-pandemic-visits-wet-market-receives-flu-data/index.html>
- A study shows the variant spreading rapidly in Britain could become resistant to vaccines.: <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/02/01/world/covid-19-coronavirus#a-study-shows-the-variant-spreading-rapidly-in-britain-could-become-resistant-to-vaccines>
- A C.D.C. report indicates a large portion of nursing home staff refuse to be vaccinated.: <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/02/01/world/covid-19-coronavirus#a-cdc-report-indicates-a-large-portion-of-nursing-home-staff-refuse-to-be-vaccinated>
- Mapping coronavirus anti-lockdown protests around the world: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/2/mapping-coronavirus-anti-lockdown-protests-around-the-world>

IX. 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.

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/ Editorials	Summary
<p>Current smoking and COVID-19 risk: results from a population symptom app in over 2.4 million people http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/thoraxjnl-2020-216422</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 24 March 2020 and 23 April 2020, UK users of the Zoe COVID-19 Symptom Study app provided baseline data including demographics, anthropometrics, smoking status and medical conditions, and were asked to log their condition daily. Participants who reported that they did not feel physically normal were then asked by the app to complete a series of questions, including 14 potential COVID-19 symptoms and about hospital attendance. The main study outcome was the development of 'classic' symptoms of COVID-19 during the pandemic defined as fever, new persistent cough and breathlessness and their association with current smoking.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of concurrent COVID-19 symptoms was used as a proxy for severity and the pattern of association between symptoms was also compared • These data are consistent with people who smoke being at an increased risk of developing symptomatic COVID-19.
<p>Longitudinal Assessment of Symptoms and Risk of SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Healthcare Workers Across 5 Hospitals to Understand Ethnic Differences in Infection Risk https://ssrn.com/abstract=3754805</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective of this article was to understand ethnic differences in SARS-CoV-2 infection risk and symptoms in hospital healthcare workers (HCW). • A Prospective longitudinal observational cohort study was done. • 1364 HCW at five UK hospitals were studied with up to 16 weeks of symptom questionnaires and antibody testing (to both nucleocapsid and spike protein) during the first UK wave in five NHS hospitals. • The main outcome measures were SARS-CoV-2 infection (seropositivity at any time-point) and symptoms. • In the UK first wave, black ethnicity (but not other ethnicities) more than doubled HCW infection risk, independent of age, sex, measured socio-economic factors and role.
<p>Structural Racism and Risk of SARS-CoV-2 in Pregnancy: A Local Population Analysis https://ssrn.com/abstract=3752692</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was a retrospective cohort study using data collected as part of public health surveillance. • One hundred and sixty-two women submitted information to the surveillance team from March to October 2020. • Many pregnant women infected by SARS-CoV-2 are essential workers. • Black women are more likely than white counterparts to have occupational exposure as the presumed source for their infection. • These vocational exposures and limitations in controlling risk could be related to lower socio-economic status, resulting from a long history of structural racism.

COVID-19 updates and sources of evidence:

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

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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.eph.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.eph.gov.et

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