



On-the-job training on emergency surgical procedures and comprehensive obstetric surgery in Mogadishu June 2010

From 17-21 June 2010, WHO provided on-the-job training on trauma management and emergency obstetric care to 50 graduate doctors and 30 medical students from Banadir University in Mogadishu. The training that took place at Banadir Hospital is a key activity of WHO to improve access to emergency services for populations living in conflict-affected areas where there is poor infrastructure and insufficient number of functioning public health facilities and hospitals, and limited health workers to respond to the rise in number of secondary complications due to injury as a result of conflict. Continuous capacity building activities will provide for specialized health workforce reserve in the event of mass casualties and other disasters.



On-the-job training provides an opportunity to enhance the health work force capacity and simultaneously deliver life-saving health services within the humanitarian response.

Emergency health services in Mogadishu struggle with few trained health workers and insufficient medical supplies. Health workers often lack specialized training in trauma management and often do not get the opportunity to receive additional training on medical and surgical advances. The ongoing conflict is putting a further burden on the already weak health system and with escalating levels of weapon-related injuries; services have been stretched to the limit especially at the point when medical aid agencies are scaling down their activities, and in some cases completely withdrawing from some areas leaving major gaps in service provision.

Between 20 March – 27 June, 1464 casualties including **23.7%** (346) children under 5 years and 46 registered deaths were reported from two of the main hospitals in Mogadishu. The deaths on site are still unknown. Children under 5 years account for 19% (165) of the **weapon-related** injuries, which remains a key concern. From **January-May** 2010, a third hospital reported 1382 weapon-related injuries including 99 cases under 15 years. 32% (438) of all cases reported from the hospital were female casualties.

Despite the challenges of implementing activities in Mogadishu which is the epicenter of the ongoing conflict in Somalia, the training of health workers in emergency medical services was successful, providing a significant improvement in the level of skills of medical staff at the hospital as well as strengthening morale amongst new graduates and medical students in light of the many challenges.

In response to the ongoing conflict in Mogadishu since early 2010, and as part of contingency planning, WHO has trained many health workers in trauma management at the Banadir Hospital. During the training sessions, many people directly received emergency medical services. This latest surgical training is part of an ongoing effort by the organization to improve the skills of Somali healthcare workers so they can save lives amid the current crisis.

On-the-job training activities are integrated within service delivery, thus acting as an important linkage between emergency response and early recovery activities. It is therefore an essential way of ensuring that the already scarce health workforce is not unnecessarily withdrawn from their role in services provision to receive training. Collaboration with institutions on the ground such as the Banadir University also provides the necessary training coverage, targeting a large number of health workers.



To maximize the impact of the training of health workers, WHO and partners will conduct further trainings in other priority areas in strengthening care for the injured, and provision of essential supplies including trauma kits. WHO also facilitates health facility rehabilitation and revitalization to provide access to essential health and emergency services.

WHO would like to thank the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation for supporting human resource development for health in Somalia, to provide the very much needed emergency life-saving services and emergency obstetric care. WHO would also like to thank Banadir Hospital, health authorities and other partners, particularly involved in security procedures, who made this training possible.