

DIGITAL HEALTH **IN** FOCUS

VOLUME 3 / ISSUE 3

JANUARY - 2024



DATA SAVES LIVES
 Evidence-based decision-making, with the ultimate goal of improving health outcomes.

USAID DIGITAL HEALTH ACTIVITY (DHA)

SUMMARY OF DATA USE PLATFORMS/TOOLS

Major Platform	Platform	What they do
Healthcare providers	Healthcare providers	Access to health data for decision-making
Community health workers	Community health workers	Access to health data for decision-making
Healthcare providers	Healthcare providers	Access to health data for decision-making
Community health workers	Community health workers	Access to health data for decision-making

“ I will use data to improve the health status of my community ”



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Printed by Central Printing Press
 Tel: +91-11-4600 5791/82

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01 (GANDA UMAR) 02 (GANDA GURAJA) 03 (GANDA...)

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13 (GANDA BURALE) 14 (GANDA SHAWANT) 15 (GANDA FARTI)

Federal Ministry of Health
 Federal Ministry of Health
 Federal Ministry of Health

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EDITORIAL

Breaking Barriers: Accelerating Digital Health Technology Adoption Within the Health System in Ethiopia

(By Tadesse Alemu)

The world is rapidly advancing toward a digital era. In the healthcare sector, digital technology presents a promising opportunity to improve health outcomes, reduce costs, and improve overall efficiency of health service delivery. It also ensures access to real-time data that can inform decision-making. Despite this potential, various barriers hinder the adoption of digital technology among health care providers, preventing the realization of these benefits. Unlocking the power and ensuring sustainability requires more than just having access to the technology itself.

The adoption of digital health technologies among healthcare providers in Ethiopia, where digitizing the health sector is a particular priority, is very low. A study done by JSI on the acceptability and use of the electronic community health information system (eCHIS) showed that despite near universal acceptance (94–97%) of eCHIS by health extension workers, utilization for routine services remains significantly lower at 50%. Lack of infrastructure and resources, insufficient training, follow-up, and supervision, simultaneous use of manual and electronic systems for recording, and heavy workload were among the many barriers identified in the acceptance-use gap¹. Similarly, a systematic review and meta-analysis revealed that only half (51%) of the healthcare professionals' are ready to adopt electronic medical record (EMR)².

The low adoption of digital health technology emanates from a variety of factors influencing healthcare providers' behavior. Individual and healthcare system factors are the major ones. Personal factors such as insufficient knowledge and skill and a negative attitude toward use of technology fall at the top of the list. Healthcare system factors, including lack of access to technology, insufficient infrastructure and resources, and administrative deficiencies, play equally important roles. The lack of user-centeredness in the design of digital technologies adds another layer of complexity to the problem. If technological innovations are to respond to healthcare system needs, interventions to facilitate and expedite the adoption of digital technologies are needed.

Efforts should be made to build healthcare workers' trust, knowledge, and skills in addition to improving the infrastructure for the smooth functioning of digital technologies, which requires active listening of user experiences and tailored solutions to ensure those experiences are or become seamless.

As we continue navigating the ever-evolving healthcare technology ecosystem, behavior change communication interventions remain critical to ensure effective use of digital health tools for quality service delivery that drives better health outcomes.

1 Bogale TN, Teklehaimanot SM, Fufa Debela T, Enyew DB, Nigusse Bedada A, Dufera Kebebew S, Nigusie Weldeab A, Wolde Daka D, Willems HJ, Bekele TA. Barriers, facilitators and motivators of electronic community health information system use among health workers in Ethiopia. *Front Digit Health*. 2023 June 7;5:1162239. doi: 10.3389/fgth.2023.1162239. PMID: 37351371; PMCID: PMC10282640.

2 A.D. Walle, et al. Readiness to use electronic medical record systems and its associated factors among health care professionals in Ethiopia: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Inform Med Unlocked*. 2022;1:101140. doi.org/10.1016/j.imu.2022.101140

MAJOR UPDATES

DHA's Assessment Presented at Global Digital Health Forum 2023



In a significant stride toward advancing global digital health solutions, DHA took a stage at the prestigious Global Digital Health Forum 2023 (#GDHF2023), where the spotlight was on the Electronic Community Health Information System (eCHIS) maturity assessment in Ethiopia.

The DHA team captivated the audience with a detailed presentation focusing on the comprehensive evaluation of Ethiopia's eCHIS. This evaluation delved into key facets such as functionality, governance and leadership, interoperability, data quality, and ICT infrastructure, shedding light on both strengths and potential areas for improvement.

The presentation focused on crucial findings offering valuable insights into the impact of the eCHIS on health outcomes and the reinforcement of health information systems in Ethiopia. The session served as a platform to discuss the challenges and opportunities intrinsic to digital health systems, sparking engaging conversations among global health experts and stakeholders.

“We are proud to have had the opportunity to share our findings and contribute to the global dialogue on digital health. We believe that by sharing our experiences and lessons learned, we can collectively work towards advancing digital health solutions that benefit communities worldwide.” – Rabeal Tadesse, Governance Director, DHA.

For key takeaways from this conference from JSI staff, including those representing DHA:

<https://www.jsi.com/stronger-health-systems-through-digital-innovation/>



Ethiopia Launches National Supply Chain Dashboard

In a groundbreaking development, the Ethiopian Ministry of Health has officially launched the National Supply Chain Dashboard, a critical tool announced by Her Excellency Mrs. Firehiwot Abebe, the State Minister of Health. This initiative marks a significant leap forward in addressing critical challenges within the nation's health supply chain.

The National Supply Chain Dashboard has been meticulously designed to enhance access to crucial data, fostering timely decision-making within the healthcare sector. DHA played a role in

supporting the technical and financial aspects of the national supply chain dashboard.

The sustainable supply of safe, effective, and affordable medicines and medical devices is essential for a robust national healthcare system. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with DHA and other stakeholders, has been actively involved in designing and implementing initiatives to establish a comprehensive pharmaceutical supply chain and medical device management system at all levels.



Photo: The National Supply Chain Dashboard launching event at Radisson Blu Hotel, on Dec 2, 2023

Recognizing the critical role of information in healthcare supply chains, the Ministry has actively worked to fortify the supply chain information management through this dashboard by:

- Integrating Pharmaceutical Logistics System (IPLS).
- Designing and integrating electronic Logistics Management Information System (e-LMIS).
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation framework.

- Integrating health program commodity supply chain management at the national level.
- Quantifying procurement and distribution of healthcare essentials.

This monumental step underscores Ethiopia's commitment to revolutionizing its healthcare logistics and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of medical supplies nationwide.

DHA's Digital Health Initiatives Showcased During High-Profile Visits

In a significant stride towards advancing Ethiopia's healthcare, the DHA played host to distinguished delegates on various occasions over the last quarter, marking the spotlight on groundbreaking digital health interventions.

On September 7, 2023, H.E. Dr. Lia Tadesse, the Minister of Health, alongside Dr. Atul Gawande, USAID Assistant Administrator for Global Health, embarked on a visit to the Ferensay Health

Center. The delegation explored the cutting-edge implementations of Electronic Medical Records (EMR), Electronic Auditable Pharmaceutical Transaction and Services (eAPTS), and Dagu facilitated by DHA's support. These high-level visits underscore the collaborative spirit and shared commitment to advancing healthcare globally through digital health solutions.



Ferensay health center transitioned to a paperless system which resulted in improved service for clients, optimized performance management, reduced patient waiting times, enhanced triage and emergency care services, and increased patient

safety through electronic medicine dispensing. Additionally, the DHA's supports integrating machines for Complete Blood Count (CBC) with EMR, leading to efficient data exchange.

Ethiopia Launches Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Health Information Systems

In a bid to address gender disparities and enhance the inclusivity of its health system, Ethiopia has introduced a groundbreaking Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Health Information Systems (HIS). Over the past two decades, the country has made significant strides in improving its health system and overall population health. However, [research reveals](#) that gender norms significantly impact health-seeking behavior and access to health services, leading to disparities in healthcare and health outcomes between men and women.

The new Gender Mainstreaming Strategy aims to ensure that gender considerations are central to policy development, planning, implementation, and monitoring of health programs. It emphasizes five key principles, including the use of gender-sensitive language, gender-specific data collection and analysis, equal access to health services, equal involvement of women and men in decision-

making, and the integration of equal treatment into steering processes.

Recognizing that addressing gender disparities within the HIS is not just a rights issue but also a development issue, Ethiopia aims to capture, analyze, report, and use gender-sensitive data effectively. This initiative aligns with global efforts to bridge the digital gender divide and increase women's involvement in digital spaces, as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals.

The launch of Ethiopia's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy marks a significant step toward addressing these gaps and ensuring that digital health systems are transformative and inclusive, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes for the entire population.

Download the full strategy here 

<https://bit.ly/3FMKz8E>

Digital Health Infrastructure Donation



DHA has made significant strides in advancing healthcare through digital technology. In the past fiscal year, DHA donated and deployed crucial digital infrastructures, including 150 desktop computers for Dagu deployment, 200 desktop computers for ePMIS in health facilities with anti-retroviral therapy pharmacies, and 40 computers to Information Revolution target areas. Additionally, 7 printers were provided to enhance DHIS2 summary data monitoring. Furthermore, DHA distributed 207 high-spec tablets for the implementation of eCHIS in selected intervention areas. This donation was coupled with on-the-job training and mentorship to ensure the functionalization of the digital tools. Regular assessments reveal improved service data quality, enhanced service delivery, and overall supply chain efficiency in the health system.

Successful Deployment of Digital Health Tools

In the past fiscal year, various crucial deployments aimed at optimizing digital infrastructures for diverse health interventions were successfully executed. Notably, the focus was on the implementation of the latest version of the DHIS2 system across intervention woredas and health sectors. eCHIS was efficiently deployed after comprehensive training, reaching 183 health posts. The eLMIS targeted 150 health facilities, with successful deployment and subsequent training of end-users. Electronic Pharmaceutical Management Information System (ePMIS) was rolled out in 150

health facilities, facing challenges in deploying the remaining 50 sites due to security concerns in the Amhara Region. Furthermore, 32 sites, having already implemented Dagu, successfully deployed the Electronic Appointment and Prescription Tracking System (eAPTS) at their dispensary units. The project emphasizes that the end goal is not just deployment but ensuring functionality to improve data quality, supply chain systems, and enable data-driven decision-making. Collaboration between the project and the public sector is crucial for maximizing the benefits of these digital tools.



16 Days Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign in DHA

In a resounding display of commitment to social justice, DHA recently marked the 16 Days of Activism with an engaging social media campaign. DHA staff actively participated in this important initiative, showcasing their dedication to fostering a world free from gender-based violence.

Under the theme “UNiTE! Invest To Prevent Violence against Women and Girls,” this year’s 16 Days Activism campaign took on a powerful and transformative focus. DHA has prioritized the integration of gender considerations into health information systems through its various interventions.



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DIGITAL HEALTH ACTIVITY (DHA)

WORK SMART. SAVE LIVES



STOP GBV
#16DaysOfActivism

SUCCESS STORY

Success story for Ferensay Health Center

By Blen Seyoum

Ferensay Health Center initiated the use of an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system in June 2021. This implementation was a collaborative effort between the DHA and the Ministry of Health. The implementation process was conducted in phases. However, during the initial stage, obstacles included staff resistance, infrastructure gaps, and a lack of management involvement. As the staff began to witness the advantages of utilizing the EMR system and management engagement improved and the implementation gradually made significant strides. Presently, Ferensay Health Center has successfully transitioned to a completely paperless system, with the EMR system being utilized in nearly all service units.

Ferensay Health Center has experienced significant advantages through the adoption of EMR. These include enhanced service provision for individuals with disabilities, improved performance management and service optimization such as revamping the outpatient department, emergency service reduced waiting time for patients across all service units, and improved tracking of vaccinated infants for accurate reporting. Additionally, the implementation of EMR has led to improved triage and emergency care services, as well as enhanced patient safety through electronic dispensing of medicines.

In addition, DHA has successfully integrated machines for complete blood count, enabling physicians and laboratory technicians to efficiently exchange data through the EMR system. This integration has significantly reduced patient

waiting time at the laboratory unit by streamlining the laboratory order process. As a result of the data obtained from the EMR, the health center relocated the laboratory service area to a new building, ensuring that patients receive standardized laboratory services. The previous laboratory was limited in space and struggled to provide optimal service to patients. The construction of the new building was made possible by the funding provided by Yeka Sub-city, as a gesture of appreciation for the health center's progress in implementing EMR and delivering excellent services to patients and the community.

The new laboratory is fully equipped with all the necessary equipment, resulting in an increasing number of patients who are now following their treatment at the health center. The facility has made significant progress in implementing the EMR, making it one of the leading health centers in providing excellent service to patients and the community.

As implementers of such systems, DHA has gained valuable knowledge on efficiently implementing digital solutions to enhance patient health and support the community's healthcare systems. Furthermore, DHA has actively supported the MOH in their efforts to implement the EMR system. Apart from customizing and deploying EMR in the health center, DHA has also made contributions by donating IT equipment, expanding the network, and providing various forms of support.



“

After confronting various challenges pre-intervention, including lower client satisfaction, interminable waiting times, and issues with lost cards, the transformative implementation of the EMR system marked a pivotal turning point for us. By streamlining processes, we gained a strategic advantage, facilitating effortless implementation, slashing manpower requirements, and minimizing expenditure on printing materials,

”

said Mr. Atnafu, CEO of Ferensay Health Center. He continues,

“

The comprehensive data now available enables meticulous follow-up and enhances the overall performance of the health center and the care we offer clients. Moreover, the system empowers us with seamless and convenient access to information, catering to diverse needs, including robust audit capabilities.

”



Name	Date	Icon
Hayat Sishaw Mangiste	2014-04-16	Person icon
Sirota Kule Alemayehu	2014-04-18	Person icon
Danyachaw Ayalew Malase	2014-04-03	Person icon
Aziz Aliyii Dacaw	2014-04-18	Person icon
Mihirat Abush Damise	2014-04-16	Person icon
Azeb Ayichillee Seefuu	2014-04-18	Person icon
Salaam Yifruu Seefuu	2014-04-18	Person icon



Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Health

Health Post Service Delivery Tally Sheet

Health Post Name

DIGITAL HEALTH **IN** FOCUS



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