



MEDINews

— *The Newsletter of the Department of Medicine* —

VISION

International leadership in health research, education and patient care.

MISSION

Through the discovery, application and communication of knowledge we prepare future physician leaders, contribute to our communities and improve the health of individuals and populations locally and globally

VALUES

- Innovation, critical inquiry and self-evaluation;
- Respect for diversity in culture and perspectives;
- Partnership and collaboration;
- A supportive and collegial environment;
- Accountability to our community of scholars and to the public.

CHAIR'S COLUMN

University of Toronto – University of Addis Ababa Academic Collaboration

Over the last three to four years the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto has established a collaborative project with the Addis Ababa University Medical School in an effort to build the skills of Ethiopian physicians to teach medical students and residents. The project has been highly successful in the Department of Psychiatry and now other departments across the Faculty of Medicine, including the Department of Medicine, are thinking of making a major investment in this effort.

Ethiopia has a population of approximately 80 million people and a total of 1800 physicians. There are approximately 100 internists in the country, including 8 medical subspecialists. One of the biggest challenges is that 80% of the physicians that go abroad for training never return to Ethiopia. A strategy to train specialists in the country has proven to be much more effective in retention of their precious physicians. In fact, with the help of the Department of Psychiatry, Ethiopia has tripled the number of psychiatrists in the country.

The medical school in Addis Ababa was founded in 1964, and the internal medicine training program was established in 1979. It is a three-year program with 30 residents per year, and a growing number of incoming residents. There is at least one fully-trained specialist in each division. The present dean of the medical school is a surgeon who trained at the University of Toronto.

The Department of Medicine collaboration is designed to build subspecialty training programs at Addis Ababa University (AAU), increasing their capacity to train and retain specialty physicians. Our faculty will work with a medical specialist at AAU to develop a curriculum designed for the needs of Ethiopia, develop the teaching skills of the Ethiopian doctors, and help to train their medical students and residents. This will be achieved by sending faculty and subspecialty residents to Ethiopia on a regular basis. A team of faculty and residents will go to Ethiopia for a minimum of four weeks, and during that time they will participate in bedside rounds, small group teaching, and formal lectures. Through correspondence and during their time there, faculty members will help with curriculum development that can be implemented throughout the year by the Ethiopian physicians.

In addition to the Department of Medicine, other clinical faculties are already involved. The Department of Surgery has helped

to build a surgical skills laboratory, modeled on the one at the University of Toronto. The Faculty of Nursing has been involved in building nursing capacity over the last number of years. The Pediatric department has provided external examiners at AAU. Other departments are exploring becoming engaged. In fact, to coordinate these burgeoning efforts, the Wilson Centre has established an office for the Toronto-Addis Ababa Academic Collaboration (TAAC) under the leadership of Clare Pain, a faculty member in Psychiatry. The Wilson Centre will support faculty planning to go to Ethiopia by providing an orientation and coordinating efforts for Toronto faculty and residents.

How will the project be funded?

To date, the Psychiatry Department has supported the travel costs for participants in the program. Faculty members have donated their time for the month. Over the last four years the faculty support for this program has been excellent, and there is a waiting list of faculty members and residents wanting to participate. The Department of Medicine plans to follow the Psychiatry model and will pay for the travel costs of faculty and residents. Housing will be provided by AAU. However, fundraising efforts to increase external support for the program are actively underway, under the leadership of the Wilson Centre.

Next steps for the Department of Medicine

Each of our divisions will be discussing whether faculty members are potentially interested in making a significant contribution to this program. A minimum commitment will be to send at least one faculty member and one resident for a month, three times a year. The Department will ascertain the degree of interest and we plan to support two or three divisions to begin this project.

I am personally excited about the opportunities for the Department of Medicine. Dr. Gena Pilotis, a hematologist/oncologist at Sunnybrook Hospital, has gone to Addis Ababa to start to build the bridges and will lead this effort for the Department. This collaboration provides an opportunity for us to learn and to contribute to a sustainable medical education program in a third-world country. The project clearly builds on our strengths as academic educators. Any of you interested in participating in this should speak with your Department Division Director and express your potential interest. Also feel free to email Gena at Eugenia.pilotis@sunnybrook.ca. Additionally, we will post information on the Department website.

Wendy Levinson,
Chair, Department of Medicine



Addis Ababa University Main Gate



University of Toronto's Dr. Gena Pilotis with faculty from AAU



Faculty of Medicine AAU