

September 2021

Health Emergency Programme Update – Somalia



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HEALTH NEEDS AND PROVISIONS

- There are 2.9 million internally displaced persons, 1.8 million of whom require humanitarian assistance
- There are 681 000 drought-affected people in all states, including in Benadir region
- Less than 1 consultation per person per year reported during the month (as compared to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) standard of 1 new visit/person per year)

KEY HEALTH INDICATORS – September 2021

- 130 Health Cluster partners
- 3.15 million people in need of health care

Funding gaps

US\$ 8.3 million Required for WHO's health emergency programme in 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

- **OUTBREAK ALERTS:** In August, a total of 544 alerts of epidemic-prone diseases were reported through the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) system; 10% of these were investigated. The three main types of alerts included: acute watery diarrhoea (34%), suspected measles (24%) and malaria (42%). Most suspected cases were reported in drought and flood-affected districts.
- **COVID-19:** In September 2021, Somalia reported 3409 laboratory-confirmed cases; 533 patients received care following admission in designated treatment centres across the country; and 191 COVID-19-associated deaths were also reported. Since the beginning of the outbreak in March 2020, 2983 patients with COVID-19 received treatment from centres designated for COVID-19.
- **COVID-19 Vaccine:** In September 2021, 71 702 people received the first dose of vaccine against COVID-19 and 127 366 received the second dose. As of September 2021, 1.4 % population were fully vaccinated and 1.6 % population received at least one dose. The COVID-19 vaccination campaign is targeting high-risk priority groups and people aged 18 years and above.

Coordination update

Coordination meetings

- One Health partners in Somalia and the technical unit of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) and headquarters convened a coordination meeting to review the implementation of the activities of the One Health strategy in Somalia, which aims to coordinate disease surveillance and response activities among humans and animal sector. The action points from this meeting included reviewing the One Health strategy for Somalia to include antimicrobial resistance activities, environmental health and food hygiene; including priority disease from the One Health strategy into the recently established Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) Strategy; and strengthening coordination among One Health partners working in Somalia. Additionally, the National Institute of Health (NIH), WHO and Africa Field Epidemiology Training Network (AFENET) met to review field activities implemented by the frontline health workers undergoing a training course in basic field epidemiology. The action points of the meetings included active follow up of trainees to ensure that they implement field activities in time for the next meeting with mentors, and supporting trainees to access surveillance information from the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) in their respective districts.
- Health Cluster partners and state-based ministries of health convened coordination meetings to improve the reporting of disease alerts by Health Cluster partners using the the EWARN; the implementation of He-RAMS; and ways to improve demand for COVID-19 vaccines. The meetings also aimed to strengthen the coordination of delivery of primary health care services among vulnerable communities.

Epidemiological update

Acute diarrhoeal disease cases

- In September 2021, a total of 6116 cases of acute diarrhoeal disease were reported from drought-affected districts through the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN). The most affected districts were Hobyo (702 cases) in South West State, Baidoa (1077 cases) in Bay region, Daynile (733 cases) in Banadir region and Hobyo (702 cases) in Galmudug state.
- The number of new cases of acute diarrhoeal disease reported in August 2021 is 51% lower than in August 2020 (12 571). This reduction is attributed to improved access to safe water and improved sanitation and hygiene among displaced communities in drought-affected districts.
- Since January, 738 samples of suspected acute diarrhoeal disease were collected and analysed in the National Public Health Reference Laboratory; 196 (26.5%) of these were confirmed as positive for *Vibrio cholerae* 01 serotype Ogawa.

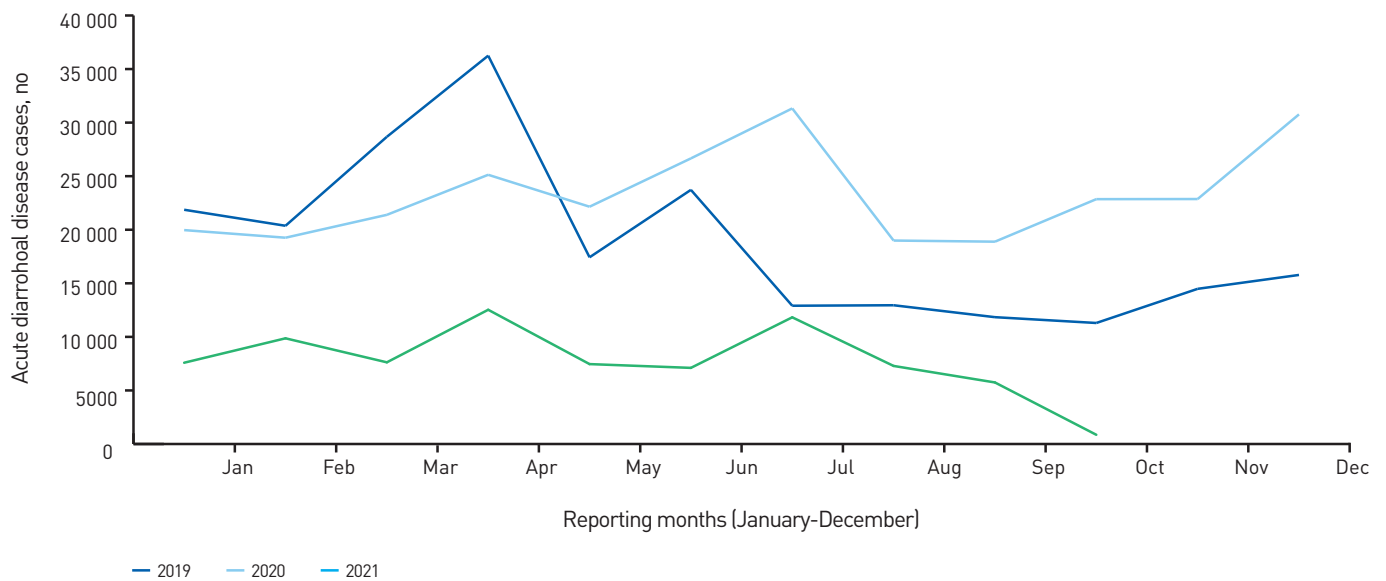
Suspected cholera cases

- Somalia is a cholera endemic country that has reported uninterrupted cholera transmissions since 2017. The heavy *Gu* rains reported during April and June of 2021 that affected districts in the basins of Rivers Juba and Shabelle led to flash floods contaminating water sources in villages located along the river banks.
- In September, 221 suspected cholera cases, including one associated death (with a case fatality rate (CFR) of 0.45%) were reported from 22 districts affected by drought and floods. Districts mostly affected include 17 districts of Benadir region, Baydhawa, Qoryooley, and Qardho.



A mission from the Ministry of Health, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) and WHO Country Office in Somalia met with partners to review joint COVID-19 response activities @ WHO

Fig.1. Acute diarrhoeal disease cases reported to EWARN, Somalia, 2019-2021

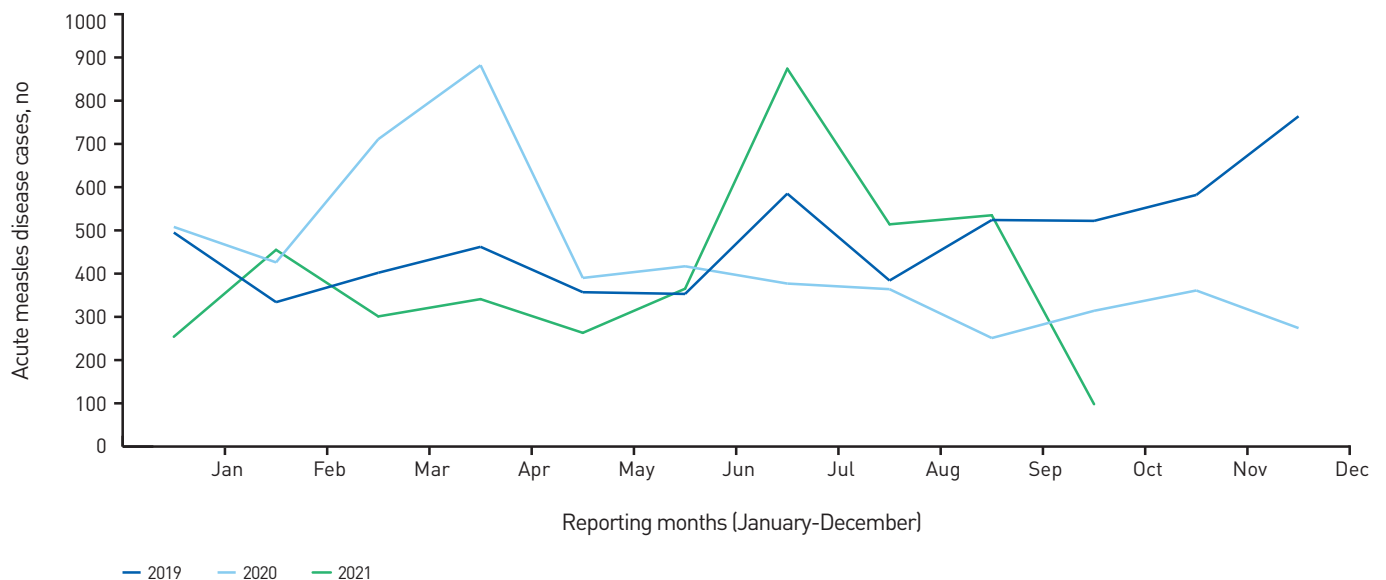


- Of the 221 cases, 142 (64%) were children aged below five years. Since January 2021, a total of 738 stool samples have been tested, of which 196 were positive for *Vibrio cholerae* 01 serotype Ogawa. Health cluster and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) cluster partners are conducting response activities to contain the current cholera outbreak.

Suspected measles cases

- The number of new suspected cases of measles reported in the EWARN from drought-affected districts started to increase since May. This is linked to the reduction in the number of children being vaccinated in high-risk districts due to the negative impact of COVID-19.
- In September 2021, 535 new suspected cases of measles reported through EWARN increased by 113% compared to 251 in September 2020.
- Of the 693 blood samples collected from suspected cases of measles since January 2021, 352 (73.2%) tested positive for measles by immunoglobulin M (IgM). Districts mostly affected include Beletweyne, Jowhar, Kismayo, Baidoa, Heliwaa, Baidoa and Marka.
- A total of 46 blood samples of measles were collected and analysed in the laboratory in Garowe; of these samples, 12 (26%) were confirmed as positive for measles IgM antibodies.

Fig.2. Suspected measles cases reported through the EWARN, Somalia, 2019-2021



Other emergency updates and response operations

Community-based surveillance

- A total of 2033 community health workers (CHWs) were deployed in 71 targeted districts to implement community-based surveillance for epidemic-prone diseases, including COVID-19. The CHWs visited 314 420 households and reached 996 711 people with preventive messages for epidemic-prone diseases and educated the communities on the importance of being vaccinated against COVID-19. The CHWs detected 3602 alerts of epidemic-prone diseases and district-based rapid response teams (RRTs) investigated them. Overall, 1490 (41%) of these alerts were found to be true. The CHWs followed up with 2467 contacts of COVID-19 confirmed cases for 14 days and no case of COVID-19 was detected among the contacts. The CHWs detected 3602 suspected cases of COVID-19 and encouraged them to isolate in their homes.

Supportive supervision and monitoring of health activities

- WHO conducted joint supportive supervision visits to 27 health care facilities. During the supervision, eight health workers (five females) in Puntland were trained on the job on how to report alerts using standard case definitions. The team conducted a data quality audit for epidemic-prone diseases. The major gaps identified included: the shortage of essential medical supplies for the management of epidemic-prone diseases; the shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs for COVID-19 prevention; low adherence to infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols by frontline health workers; and missing records for COVID-19 in the Open Data Kit (ODK). Action points from the audit include: training of health workers on IPC practices; the provision of PPE to lower-level health facilities by the Ministry of Health and Human Services (MOH); and training of community health workers on reporting COVID-19 related data using ODK.
- The technical team of Puntland's MOH and WHO conducted integrated supportive supervision in 4 laboratories in Galkacyo, Gardo, Bossaso and six sites that are using Antigen-based Rapid Diagnostic Kit (Ag-RDT) for COVID-19 testing. They trained 14 laboratory technicians (1 female and 13 male). Major gaps identified during the supervision visits included: the lack of testing protocols for COVID-19; the difficulty of sending laboratory results due to poor internet and telephone connectivity; the heavy workload of the laboratory technician, as only one person is working both in the laboratory and community surveillance teams. A total of 46 blood samples of measles were collected and analysed in the laboratory in Garowe, of which 12 (26%) tested positive for measles IgM antibodies.

Outbreak investigation and response

- WHO supported state- and district-based RRTs from the Puntland MOH to investigate alerts of acute watery diarrhoeal disease in Kobdhexaad village of Ufeyn district. The teams convened a meeting with the health workers, reviewed surveillance records from the health facilities and listed all suspected cases in a standard line list register. The RRTs conducted community education sessions and sensitized affected communities to use water from protected water sources. WASH cluster partners in Kobdhexaad village were requested to support water quality surveillance activities, provide hygienic kits to the affected communities and scale up community sensitization on the use of water from protected sources.

Training of health workers

- During September, 23 health workers (14 female and 9 male) were trained on the use of Antigen-based Rapid Diagnostic Test (Ag-RDT). The health workers were provided with Antigen RDT kits to test suspected COVID-19 cases. Overall, 352 community health workers (CHWs) were trained in eight districts in Puntland and 10 health workers (including three females) in Belad-weyne district in Hirshabelle state.
- In Somaliland, a biomedical engineer started to provide on-the-job training for staff who maintain equipment at the Hargeisa General Hospital. He also met with the Director-General at the Ministry of Health and Development to brief him on his activities and the short-term plan. The DG highly appreciated the work of WHO and the support provided by the biomedical engineer.

Essential medical supplies

During the reporting period, WHO donated 1500 Ag-RDTs, and three cholera kits to Hirshabelle state. The supplies are adequate to test 1500 suspected COVID-19 cases and manage 300 cholera patients respectively.

Nutrition update

- WHO supports state health ministries in the management of cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) with medical complications in the districts affected by drought, floods, and conflict in Somalia. This is provided through technical support, training and the provision of supplies to nutritional stabilization centres in the country. The supplies provided include SAM kits, distributed to the state health ministries on a quarterly basis.
- In September, 1050 new SAM cases with medical complications admitted to 27 stabilization centres in Somalia.
- Overall, 919 (88%) recoveries, 32 (3%) defaulters, 19 (1.8%) medical referrals and (3.8%) deaths were reported in September.
- WHO supported the Federal MOH and the MoH of Galmudug to conduct a four-day training in Dhusamareb for 20 health workers (10 female and 10 male) on the management of severe acute malnutrition with medical complications in patients.



The Ministry of Health, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) and WHO Country Office in Somalia conducted a joint mission to Galmudug to review joint COVID-19 response activities in September 2021 @WHO

Trauma case monitoring and critical care

- As the country is experiencing different types of emergencies, including conflict, WHO is closely monitoring the number of people affected by these conflicts in the country and responding accordingly. In September 2021, a total of 494 injuries were reported from the health facilities through the District Health Information System (DHIS-2). Of these, 66.9% were burns. These injuries represent a 33% increase compared to 5033 injuries reported during the same period in September 2020. The reported cases are managed in different hospital in all states.

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Our weekly and monthly information products

Weekly cholera infographic:

- <http://www.emro.who.int/somalia/information-resources/acute-watery-diarrhoeacholera-situation-reports.html>

Monthly COVID-19 reports:

- <http://www.emro.who.int/countries/somalia/index.html>
- COVID-19 Dashboard-Somalia



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