

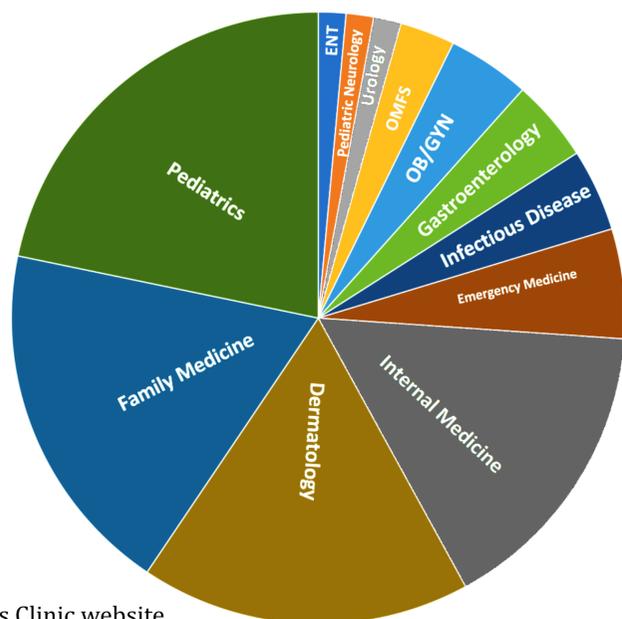
## Introduction

- ❖ The Addis Clinic connects volunteer physicians with local organizations providing frontline healthcare to vulnerable and underserved populations by utilizing telemedicine
- ❖ Our objective was to assess utilization of the organization's services for support of community-based epilepsy care.

## Methods

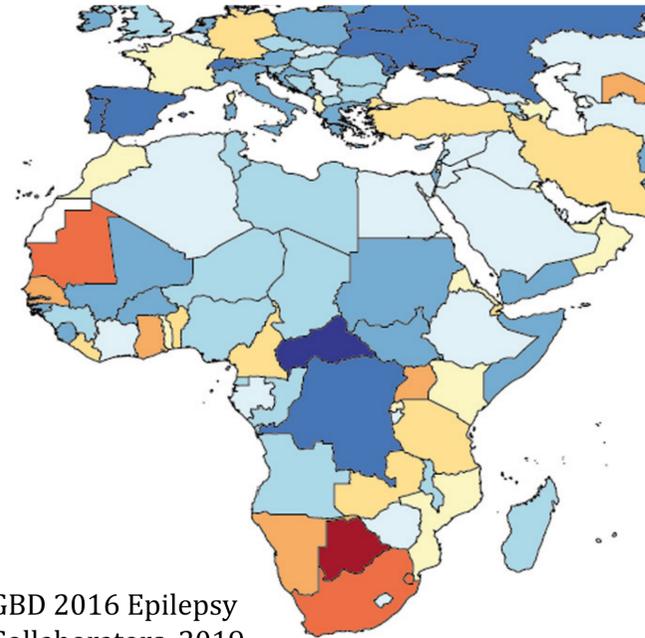
- ❖ Review current literature describing the epidemiology of epilepsy in Africa
- ❖ Assess utilization of teleconsultation services using Addis Clinic database, with a focus on epilepsy-related cases

Addis Consults by Specialty: February 2019

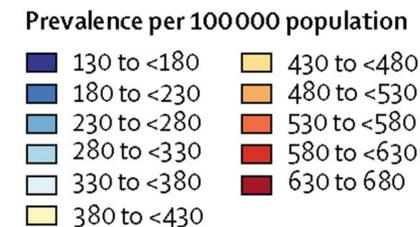


## Background

- ❖ An estimated 10 million people in Africa suffer from epilepsy, while only 15% receive appropriate treatment<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Barriers to care include limited workforce, diagnostic equipment, access to medications, and specialist support<sup>2</sup>.
- ❖ Stigma and poor health literacy contribute to low rates of seeking health care for epilepsy
- ❖ Adherence to anti seizure medications (ASMs) improves overall quality of life -yet variable access to diagnostics and medications yields a high treatment gap
- ❖ Evidence suggests a high prevalence of epilepsy due to focal lesions that may indicate preventable cases<sup>5</sup>.



GBD 2016 Epilepsy Collaborators, 2019



## Results

- ❖ Most consultations were for patients residing in sub-Saharan Africa including Kenya, Cameroon, Ethiopia; other areas included Haiti
- ❖ The most frequently utilized specialties include Family Medicine, Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, and Dermatology<sup>5,6</sup>
- ❖ In 2018 Addis Clinic conducted 563 teleconsultations for 337 unique patients; of those, only four cases were related to epilepsy
- ❖ Since end of 2018, the clinic has consistently averaged 100-200 consults each month
- ❖ Neurology, including Pediatric Neurology, represented only 0-3% of the total consults, or 0-3 consults a month

## Discussion

- ❖ The subspecialty distribution shows relatively low utilization of pediatric neurology
- ❖ Early diagnosis with proper treatment is key to improving health outcomes for the pediatric epilepsy population
- ❖ Given the evidence reviewed demonstrating need, low utilization of neurology consultation services through Addis Clinic is consistent with the estimated 75-90% treatment gap in sub-Saharan Africa alone<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ Close coordination with our primary care colleagues and local health workers to recognize risk factors for epilepsy may lead to earlier identification of cases and improve potential for successful treatment

## Conclusions

- ❖ Telemedicine provides a platform to provide epilepsy care and education to regions of low resources worldwide
- ❖ Potential strategies to optimize epilepsy care through Addis clinic include:
  - ❖ Educating local health care workers via video platform
  - ❖ Expanding outreach to form partnerships with local providers to improve health literacy and address the stigma associated with epilepsy
  - ❖ Recruiting additional neurology specialist volunteers
- ❖ Due to the COVID pandemic, the culture of medical care is quickly adapting to demands for virtual medicine
- ❖ It is time to take advantage of our technological resources to improve outcomes for children living with epilepsy, regardless of where they live.

## References

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