PROJECT “HORN OF AFRICA” – SETTING UP OF A NETWORK OF SERVICES FOR THE DIAGNOSIS AND THE PREVENTION OF THE ONCOLOGIC DISEASES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA.

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Italian NGO born in 1999 with the aim to establish health cooperation projects devoted to the implementation of diagnostic facilities in underserved countries for the microscopic diagnosis of cells and tissues with two main purposes:

➢ A better management of neoplastic diseases
➢ The fostering of preventive medicine programs
Establishment of a network of services for the diagnosis and prevention of oncological diseases in the Horn of Africa

- Establishment of a Pathology lab at the Hargeisa Group Hospital in Hargeisa, Somaliland;
- Implementation of the Pathology lab already established by APOF and fully functioning at the Hopital de Balbalà, Republic of Djibouti;
- Start-up of a collaboration protocol between the two labs for the benefit of the populations of the two geographical areas affected by the intervention.
Some figures of Somaliland

- Self-declared state in 1991 (civil war in 1988)
- Tribal structure (formerly British Protectorate)
- Government elected democratically
- Non recognized country (official political contacts with Ethiopia, Djibouti, South Africa, Sweden and UK)
- Almost 100% are muslims (sunni branch)
- 4 million inhabitants
- Capital and main city: Hargeisa (1,5 million est.)
- Direct flights only to/from Addis Ababa and Dubai
- Life expectancy: roughly 50 y
- HARGEISA GROUP HOSPITAL (HGH) (our target)
Past glamour

Present nightmare
Infibulation reaches nearly 100%
THE SOMALILAND BRANCH OF THE PROJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF A PATHOLOGY LABORATORY IN HARGEISA GROUP HOSPITAL AND TRAINING OF TECHNICIANS

➢ INSTITUTION OF A PATHOLOGY LAB AT THE HARGEISA GROUP HOSPITAL (HGH), HARGEISA, SOMALILAND.

✓ HGH Administration will take care of the refurbishment of the rooms, of the organization of furniture and of water and electricity facilities.

✓ Thanks to the funding of the Italian Waldensians Church, APOF will provide to the purchasing of all equipments and of the consumables for the beginning of the activities.

✓ The lab has been completely equipped last March; after a preparatory course held in October 2018, in which have been involved 14 participants from the local health staff, through a final test have been selected three lab technicians (at present working in the clinical lab) to prosecute the training as pathology assistant.
TRAINING OF LOCAL TECHNICIANS FOR THE WHOLE MANAGEMENT OF HISTOLOGICAL AND CYTOLOGICAL SAMPLES (GROSSING OF SURGICAL SPECIMENS AND PREPARATION OF SLIDES).

The three technicians have begun to be instructed about the preparation of the microscopic slides and about the grossing of specimens immediately after the setting up of the lab equipments.

Their training will prosecute next September (now!) at the Hospital of Balbalà in Djibouti, for about three months.

Just before the end of 2019, they will come back to Hargeisa and will complete their training beginning to work on local specimens under the supervisions of APOF staff.

The official beginning of the activities for the Pathology lab in Hargeisa is expected for late 2019.

INSTALLATION OF A TELEPATHOLOGY SYSTEM FOR THE REMOTE DIAGNOSES, CONTINUOUS TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE IN LABORATORY MANAGEMENT.

In order to rend diagnoses in a reasonable period of time, APOF will provide the pathology lab to a special scanner able to digitize the slides to obtain a high-resolution image which can be send through the Internet where a pathologist is available and can directly diagnose the "virtual slides".
THE FUTURE: NETWORK OF LOCAL PATHOLOGY LABORATORIES AND A PATHOLOGIST IN HGH.

- APOF will manage the setting up of a local pathology laboratories network in the Horn of Africa, up to now involving the Balbalà Hospital as hub and the Hargeisa Group Hospital as spoke; contacts are under way with other health facilities in Ethiopia in order to enlarge this network through future projects.

- The final goal of the Somaliland branch of the present project should be the total independency of the HGH pathology lab, that can be obtained with the permanent presence of a pathologists on site.

- The presence of a pathology lab can be the also ease the institution of preventive medicine programs (i.e. cytology-based screening for cervical and breast cancer).
Name: KHEDER DAUD AHMED
Age: 40                  Sex: M
Address/Contact: 4595873

Specimen:
Right testis (undescended)

Macroscopic description:
Orchiectomy specimen, 12 cm long. Atrophic testis of 1,5 cm in diameter. Spermatic cord of 7 cm.

Diagnosis:
ATROPHIC TESTIS SECONDARY TO CHRYPTORCHIDIA

Date: March 5, 2019   Pathologist: Dr. José I. López

First pathological report in HGH (historical)
BIOPSY NUMBER 19B0006

Name: SHIKRI JAMEC
Age: 49        Sex: F
Address/Contact: 

Specimen: 
Right thyroidectomy

Macroscopic description:
Thyroid lobule measuring 9.5x6x7 cm in maximum diameters. Cut section shows a multinodular surface including a whitish subcapsular nodule measuring 7 mm in diameter.

Diagnosis:
RIGHT THYROIDECTOMY: PAPILLARY MICROCARCINOMA (7 MM) OF THE THYROID (pT1), FOLLICULAR VARIANT, WELL DIFFERENTIATED, INTRATHYROID, IN THE CONTEXT OF A MULTINODULAR HYPERPLASIA.

Comment:
Papillary microcarcinoma (also called occult papillary carcinoma) of the thyroid gland, follicular variant, is a low grade neoplasm with a good long-term prognosis. However, the possibility of regional lymph node involvement exists. This eventuality may worsen the good evolution of this tumour and must be periodically ruled out using, sonography, MRI or CT scan, if possible. The patient must also be followed to detect possible tumour nodules in the left lobule along the future evolution.

Date: March 6, 2019        Pathologist: Dr. José I. López

First pathological report in HGH with cancer: Papillary thyroid microcarcinoma
Clockwise: Antonio Borrelli, APOF desk officer; Federico Acciai, lab technician and responsible of the training program; Jose Ignacio Lopez, pathologist and ESP representative; Stefano Guzzetti, pathologist and APOF responsible for Somaliland project and Paolo Giovenali, pathologist and APOF President.