



## **PREGART KICK OFF WORKSHOP AND INVESTIGATORS MEETING REPORT, SEPTEMBER 14-16 2019, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

PREGART clinical trial conducted project kick-off workshop and investigators meeting in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Elilly international hotel from September 14-16, 2019 with the following list of objectives

- i. To officially communicate the commencement of the trial to the public, health professionals, policy makers and scientists in Ethiopia and all over the world.
- ii. To communicate the objectives and anticipated impact of the trial to key stakeholders (community members, trial participants, health professionals, policy makers and researchers).
- iii. To update the progress of Project implementation to participating institutions and other key stakeholders.

During this first gathering, three important meetings were convened: 1) investigators meeting 2) Kick-off workshop and 3) trial site hospitals representatives' meeting. The meeting was broadcasted in three Ethiopia local Media which helped create awareness within the community. The outputs of the meeting were further communicated using HU website, media, PREGART Project Website and EDCTP official pages.

During the KOM, all invited stakeholder representatives attended the meeting including PREGART consortium investigators, Ethiopian Ministry of Health, Regional and city administration health bureau heads, Ethiopian Ministry of Science and higher Education, Ethiopia Food and Medicine Regulatory Authority, EDCTP representative, PREGART Scientific advisory committee (SAC) members, Hawassa University higher officials, Makerere University trial management office staff, Hawassa University trial management office staff, trial site directors in Ethiopia, Community representatives, and local broadcasting media.



EDCTP



This project is part of the EDCTP2 Programme supported by the European Union RIA2017MC-2009

The KOM was officially opened by Dr. Eng. Fiseha Getachew, Vice president for academic affairs of Hawassa University, and Delegate of Hawassa University President. In his speech, after welcoming the participants, he addressed the following core points.

1. He highlighted the vision, mission, goal and strategies of the University
2. He also gave a high-level summary of overall activities at Hawassa University in the preceding year.
3. Dr Getachew also discussed the University's plan to advance research undertakings and that PREGART is one of the key projects in fulfilling this goal.

Finally, Dr. Getachew acknowledged the PREGART investigators of the Consortium as well the funder of the project, EDCTP for the efforts in releasing this important project and by pledging support to the successful implementation of the Project.



*Dr. Eng Fiseha Getachew, Vice president for academic affairs of Hawassa University, and Delegate of Hawassa University president, addressing opening and welcoming speech for the invited participants.*

Mr. Girma Eshetu from the Ethiopian Ministry of Health also addressed the audience. Mr Eshetu raised key issues including:

- The burden of HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia is still high
- Mother to child HIV/AIDS transmission to is one of the key contributors to Pediatrics HIV/AIDS infections in the country.
- Hi briefly highlighted the strategies and ongoing activities on prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS.
- He expressed interest in using research outputs (including PREGART) to optimize the policy and guidelines in the Ministry.

Mr Eshetu ended his speech by congratulating the researchers who contributed to the effort and pledging support to the PREGART Project throughout the implementation period.



*Mr. Girma Eshetu, State minister advisor and Dr. Liya Tadesse (State Minister) delegate, Ethiopian Ministry of Health, addressing keynote speech representing Ethiopia Ministry of Health.*

Subsequently various speakers and presenters addressed the audience and pledged support to PREGART. One of the scientific advisory committee (SAC) member, Professor Josephat Byamugisha from Makerere University, gave a goodwill message representing the other SAC members. The EDCTP representative, Shingai Machingaidze, briefly presented the overview of EDCTP and its research grant award portfolio in developing countries.

Following this, the investigators presented overview of project. They have presented the objectives and anticipated impact, status and the details of the work packages, anticipated risks and mitigation, communication and dissemination plan.



*Professor Josephat Byamugisha, PREGART Scientific advisory committee (SAC) member, Makerere University, Uganda, addressing Goodwill message for the project.*



*Shingai Machingaidze, EDCTP representative, presenting the overview of European and developing countries trial partnership - EDCTP and research grants awarded by EDCTP.*



*Prof Eleni Aklillu, Principal investigator, Karloniska institute (KI), Sweden, presenting the Overview of the PREGART project (Aims/Objectives, Endpoints and Impacts).*



*Dr. Jackson Mukonzo, Principal investigator, Makerere University, Uganda, presenting PREGART Overview (Anticipated Challenges and Mitigation Strategies).*



*Dr. Marco Simonelli, ISS, Italy, presenting PREGART overview (Communication and dissemination component).*



*Dr. Mekdes Daba, Secretary, Ethiopian Society of Obstetrician and Gynecologist (ESOG), St. Paul Millennium Medical College, chairing the discussion of the meeting.*



*From left to right (Dr. Mukonzo, Prof. Aklillu, Mrs. Machingaidze and Dr. Simonelli, addressing the participants concerns, comments and questions during the discussion of the meeting.*



*Dr. Eba Mijena, Director General for research and academics - Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Ethiopia (MoSHE), Ethiopia, addressing closing remarks of the meeting representing Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Ethiopia which is the ethical clearance issuing organization.*