

## **Cancer Patient Pathways and Referrral between Health Care Levels in Ethiopia**

Over the last decades, cancer incidence and mortality have been increasing around the world, developing to become a major burden to fragile health systems in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. Cancer survival rates differ significantly around the world, which has been mainly attributed to an advanced stage of presentation of cancer patients, as well as long diagnostic and treatment initiation intervals in regions with comparatively low survival rates. Acknowledging this, in the AG Global Health we have recently extended our focus on research in the field of access to diagnosis and treatment for cancer patients in African countries, such as Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is not only the second most populated country in Africa, but with only 20% of the households living in urban areas, it is also one of the least urbanized countries worldwide. With five cancer care centres outside the capital city and one hospital in the country providing radiotherapy, well-coordinated referral processes are one key element of timely cancer diagnosis and treatment for currently more than 67 000 people annually diagnosed with cancer in the country.

In cooperation with the School of Public Health at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, we are currently conducting a mixed-method study aiming to assess the current state of cancer patient referral between health care levels and identify points of attack within the health care system to be addressed by further interventional studies to achieve timely diagnosis and treatment for an increasing number of cancer patients in Ethiopia.

### **Research interests:**

- Access to care of cancer patients
- Diagnostic and treatment intervals in cancer patient care
- Breast Cancer