

## Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) Centre

*Confronting Somaliland's  
Silent Health Crisis*



Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are emerging as one of Somaliland's most pressing health challenges. Diabetes mellitus (DM) and hypertension (HTN), in particular, are major drivers of premature mortality, accounting for more than 30% of all deaths nationwide (World Bank 2020). Yet until recently, specialised services for diagnosis and treatment were almost non-existent. Patients often went undiagnosed, received delayed treatment, or developed complications that could have been prevented with early care.

In 2023, Pharo Foundation partnered with the Ministry of Health Development to launch Somaliland's first dedicated NCD Centre at Hargeisa Group Hospital (HGH). The aim was simple: to bring high-quality, accessible DM and HTN services into the public system, while at the same time raising awareness and building national capacity to respond to the growing NCD burden.

### The Problem

Research shows that nearly one in five patients visiting hospitals in Hargeisa and Burao suffer from an NCD, with DM and HTN the most common conditions. Yet most Somalilanders have never been screened for these diseases. According to the International Diabetes Federation, more than 13 million Africans live with undiagnosed diabetes, and the situation in Somaliland reflects that reality.

Information on prevalence is scarce, risk factors are poorly understood, and hospitals have lacked the capacity to provide targeted care. The result is a growing wave of late diagnoses, preventable complications, and avoidable deaths.

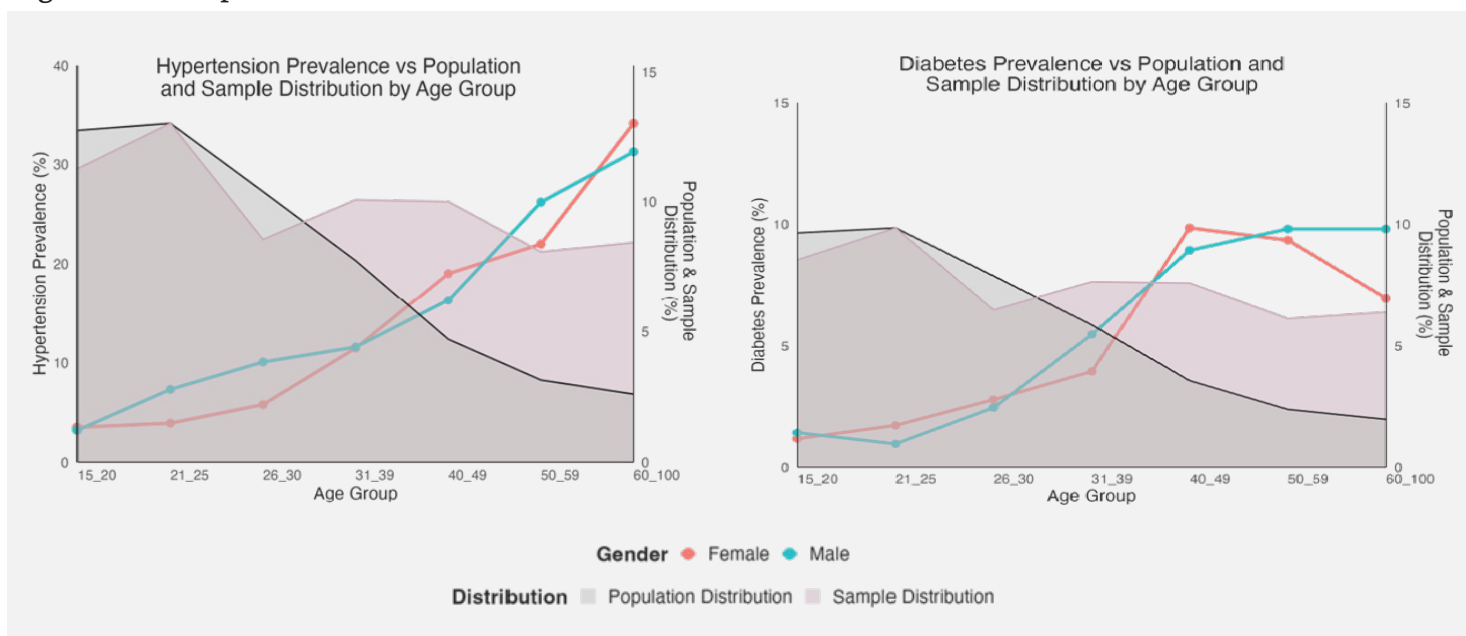


## Our Response

The NCD programme in Somaliland rests on two pillars: awareness and access. First, to reach people who are undiagnosed, we conduct community-based screenings and awareness campaigns. By bringing services into workplaces, markets, and public spaces, we increase early detection while also promoting healthier lifestyle habits. Since launch, the programme has hosted more than 100 screening camps, reaching over 17,000 people, and carried out more than 30 awareness campaigns targeting the working-age population most at risk.

Second, to address the gap in specialised services, Pharo established an NCD Centre at HGH, now serving as the national referral facility. Here, patients can access diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up under one roof. The Centre also trains health workers, integrating NCD management into primary health care and building long-term system capacity. To date, over 500 health workers have been trained.

The NCD Centre is reshaping Somaliland's health system by introducing specialised care for diabetes and hypertension, alongside large-scale screening and training. Lessons from Hargeisa, together with our ventures in Ethiopia, are guiding plans for a consultation-driven diagnostic hub in Addis Ababa and a stronger regional health presence.



Notes: Prevalence of hypertension (HTN) and diabetes mellitus (DM) by age and gender. Figures show the percentage of patients diagnosed within each age group, disaggregated by sex. Both conditions increase steadily with age, though HTN is generally higher among males. This cross-sectional study utilised data from community-based screenings conducted in the Marodijeex Region between 2023 and 2024, with a total sample of 10,503 individuals screened through convenience sampling during outreach programmes.

## Facts & Figures

- ▶ **100+ community campaigns** conducted, focusing on early detection and prevention.
- ▶ **5,300+ patients** treated in the Centre's first year, generating over 13,600 visits including follow-ups.
- ▶ **17,000+ individuals** screened across Hargeisa, with 20% diagnosed with previously undetected NCDs.
- ▶ **518 health workers** trained, exceeding targets.

## A Turning Point in Diabetes Care

When Mr. Ahmed, a 40-year-old with uncontrolled diabetes, came to the NCD Centre, his condition was critical. Despite years of medication, his blood sugar levels remained dangerously high, putting him at risk of serious complications. At the Centre, he received new medication alongside lifestyle counselling on diet, exercise, and smoking cessation. Within six months, his health stabilised. Within a year, his blood sugar had normalised to the point that medication was no longer necessary. Today, he manages his condition through lifestyle changes alone, a transformation that shows what early, consistent, and holistic NCD care can achieve.