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*Dr. Hiwot Gebrelassie is an Internist from Addis Ababa University School of Medicine. She did 15 months of fellowship at Bern University Hospital, Inselspital.*

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### Introduction

My very first day at the Inselspital began with a warm welcome by Prof. Hansjakob Furrer, the head of the Department of Infectious diseases at the University Hospital Bern, accompanied by his young and vibrant team. Afterwards, I was assigned to the hospital epidemiology and infection control unit, where I was going to spend the following six months. During my stay in this unit, I regularly joined the isolation rounds, team meetings and research project sessions that took place once per week. I was also given a chance to work on research projects as a principal investigator with close mentoring by PD Dr. Jonas Marschall. PD Dr. Jonas Marschall is a brilliant clinician and a well-seasoned scientist. Below, I shortly describe these research projects:

### Project Reports

#### 1) Low yield of MRSA in hemodialysis patients: 10 years experience

-The aim of our study was to determine the prevalence of nasal methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) colonization in hemodialysis patients and to analyse the cost effectiveness of our approach compared to an alternative strategy. We found the overall prevalence of MRSA colonization in hemodialysis patients over the 2004–2013 decade to be low at 3.6% (or, 1.2% of all specimens obtained). As a result, we concluded that, in an area of low MRSA endemicity (<5%), regular nasal screenings of a risk population yielded a low rate of MRSA carriers. Twice-yearly MRSA screening of dialysis patients is unlikely to be cost-effective if MRSA prevalence is low. As a result of this finding, the frequency of screening was reduced from twice to once per year and it will most likely be terminated altogether in 2016 at the University Hospital of Berne. The abstract of this work was presented on the 54th ICCAC in Washington, DC. The manuscript has been published in *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol.* 2015 May 26:1-4

#### 2) Effectiveness of decolonization in hemodialysis patients: a systematic review and meta-analysis

- The objective of our study was to summarize the effect of nasal ( $\pm$  whole body wash) MRSA decolonization in long-term hemodialysis patients by means of a systematic review of the scientific literature. Our results show that the use of mupirocin together with whole body decolonization is highly effective in eradicating MRSA carriage in hemodialysis patients by 0.88 (95% CI 0.75-0.95). The current literature, however, is characterized by a lack of comparative effectiveness studies for this intervention. This study has been shown in poster format at the 2015 European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) in Copenhagen, Denmark. The manuscript of this work has been accepted for publication in *Journal of Hospital Infection* and is currently available online at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195670115003230>.

After these two projects and a glimpse on hospital epidemiology, I moved on to work in the “travel clinic” lead by Prof. Rauch Andri. Beyond being a talented researcher, Prof. Rauch Andri is also an excellent clinician. My experience in this clinic inspired my third project, entitled “Travel to the tropics and its impact on viral control in HIV patients in the Swiss HIV

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**SSI/ISID Fellowship  
Report of  
Gebreselassie Hiwot  
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## SSI/ISID Fellowship Report *continued*

Cohort Study”.

3) Travel to the tropics and its impact on viral control in HIV Patients in the Swiss HIV Cohort Study

- We analysed 16'635 patients between 01.01.1989 - 28.02.2015 in the SHCS. We found travel to the tropics is a common practice in the SHCS participants. One in ten virologically suppressed individuals at a pre-travel visit encountered viral rebound at the post-travel visit, at highest risk are Sub-Saharan African HIV-positive travellers. The manuscript of this work is on preparation for submission.

### Conclusion

In the remaining months of my stay, I had the privilege to shadow the ID fellows and their mentors in the consultation service. This was by far the most complex and demanding service given by the department reaching out to every corner of the hospital. It was impressive to see the harmonious and flawless work of the infectious diseases team in itself and in interaction with other departments. I highly value the fact that the core concern of the team was always delivering a high quality service to patients. I am honoured to have been a part of such a team and witness such a leadership from Prof. Hansjakob Furrer. Prof. Hansjakob Furrer is a pioneer in the world of HIV with immense experience in the field. He is also a gifted teacher in sharing his knowledge and providing a positive guidance to his fellows.

During my 15 months stay, I had the opportunity to participate in teaching seminars, morning reports, journal clubs and also several national and international conferences. Apart from my exciting clinical and research experience, I joined Aids-Hilfe Schweiz, a non-profit organization, in different HIV awareness and teaching sessions mainly concerning the immigrant population of Switzerland.

In the historic and beautiful city of Bern, I have witnessed the pleasant smell of spring, the breath taking colours of autumn, the calmness of winter and some heavy rain of summer.

I am very grateful to my colleagues and friends, for that you went extra miles to teach me the language and to make me feel at home.

Lastly, I would like to thank the SSI/ISID Review Committee for choosing me to be an awardee of 2014 and for supporting the fellowship program.