

Tanzania Assistant Medical Officers and Clinical Officers

Author Profile:

Duncan Ndimbo is a Principal Clinical Officer in Tanzania East Africa. He started as a Clinical Assistant in 1995 and is now a Principal Clinical Officer. He is the owner and director of Mtwivila Dispensary and CEO of a Green Future Dream Initiative Non-Governmental Organization registered in Tanzania Mainland. He is a Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision provider and National Trainer of Trainers on VMMC. Additionally, he serves as the Chairman of Board of Neema Rehabilitation Polyclinic owned by Anglican Church Iringa, a Health coordinator to the Anglican Church of Tanzania Diocese of Ruvuma, a board Member of Neema Craft Disabled Centre, and is a chairman of See Ability First International Tanzania (SAFi), an organization registered in the United Kingdom. Duncan works all across Tanzania and East Africa.



General Information:

In 1961 the implementation and construction of a training center in Tanzania, named the Rural Aid Centre was created with assistance from President Mwalimu Nyerere and Geigy Pharmaceutical Company and The Basel Foundation for the Advancement of Developing Countries. The goal of this center was to support a training program in Ifakara, Tanzania, which offered a three-month basic first aid training to prepare locals to work in village dispensaries.

In 1973, with the success of the Rural Aid Centre, the Ministry of Health and the faculty at Dar es Salaam asked The Basel Foundation to help upgrade the center to a Medical Assistant Training Centre (MATC). The Foundation agreed to support the MATC for five years, including financing new infrastructure (e.g., new lecture halls and dormitories), and then transition it to local ownership. COs were amongst the first cadre trained.

In 1978, the Tanzanian government took responsibility for the MATC. Heavy seasonal rains and inadequate maintenance left the MATC in disrepair. The head of another local health institution recounted, "The MATC was really starting to go down, not enough funding, poor management, no innovation and leadership is lacking." In 1994, the MATC upgraded to again to become a Clinical Officer Training Center (COTC). Clinical Officers then had the ability to train as a CO or extended training to become an Assistant Medical Officer. The Clinical Officer and Assistant Medical Officer profession has

had a few name changes and undergone many trials and tribulations but has come out as one of the main health cadres providing care to the country.

Entry Criteria:

Eligible candidate for admission to Ordinary Diploma in Clinical Medicine program must obtain a minimum of “C” PASS in Chemistry/Biology and other Science subjects and “D” in Physics at Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) OR Form six candidates with a minimum of “E”(E=Pass from Pass/Fail) in Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Courses in Mathematics and/or English language is an added advantage.

There is no entrance exam required for the professions nor clinical experience unless moving from CO to AMO where one moves from CO to AMO by recommendation and examination from the practicing COs.

Education:

In Tanzania there are 21 clinical officer government colleges, and 52 private colleges. (See Annex 1)
The training program extends over a period of 3 years and consists of advanced theoretical and practical training and education. (See Table 1)

Table 1: The 3 Parts to Clinical Officer Training

Part 1 consists of a theoretical component, including Internal Medicine, Pediatrics and Child Health, Surgery, and Obstetrics and Gynecology. Part 2 consists of the clinical rotations of all the subjects contained in Part 1. Part 3 consists of Community Medicine training and education.
--

Individuals that graduate from the CO training program in Tanzania receive a Diploma from the Ministry of Health. Experienced Clinical Officers may enroll in an advanced Diploma in Clinical Medicine which takes two years to complete. This qualification is regarded as equivalent to a ‘first degree in medicine’ by universities and the Ministry of Health in the country. A further two years training from the Clinical Officer level leads to a specialist qualification known as an Assistant Medical Officer in anesthesia, medicine, surgery and radiology etc. The AMO training consists of two years of clinical training, 3 months of surgery, 3 months of obstetrics with a minimum of five supervised cesarean sections. Two diplomas may be awarded, an ‘ordinary’ Diploma (4 year of secondary school -3 years) and Advanced Diploma for Clinical Medicine (advance- 2 years).

The graduates known as Assistant Medical Officers which ceases to exist since 2017 may upgrade by studying a Bachelor's Degree in Clinical Medicine in any East African country for three years or study it in Tanzania for four years and graduate as a doctor, equivalent to an MD. Or an AMO can restart their education and study to be a Medical Doctor(MD) which is a 5-year course plus 1 internship year making a total of 6 years and can add 1 year to earn a Medical Bachelor and Bachelor’s in Surgery(MBBS) if interested.

Financing Education:

Some programs are funded by the Government some are privately funded. (see Appendix 1 for universities)

Accrediting/Regulatory Bodies:

The Tanganyika Medical Training Board is responsible for the accreditation of programs and the awarding of the CO and AMO qualifications under the Tanzania - Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC) in collaboration with the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE). NACTE encompasses all tertiary education and training institutions, outside of universities and their affiliated colleges; examples include delivering courses at technician, semi-professional levels that lead to awards of: certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training certifies medical degree programs through the Tanzanian Commission for Universities.

The Tanganyika Medical Council regulates the practice of the profession.

Professional Licensure:

The Tanganyika Medical Training Board awards the CO their qualifications. Upon receipt of the qualification, the graduate has to register with the Tanganyika Medical Council, which regulates the profession. A range of professional associations also exist, but they possess no regulatory power.

CO are registered and licensed through the Medical Consular for Tanzania. There is a searchable licensing database for COs and AMOs through NACTE.

Scope of Practice:

COs are allowed to work in both public and private health facilities thus Dispensaries, Health Centre, District Hospital, Regional/referral Hospital and in Non-governmental organization.

These cadres are medical personnel capable of promoting and providing curative as well as preventive health care at the rural and district level. These cadres are able to work independently, with limited or no supervision from a physician, and within the context of medical practitioner shortages, especially in rural areas. These individuals are skilled to manage common medical and reproductive health and simple surgical problems.

A clinical officer performs general and specialized medical duties such as diagnosis and treatment of disease and injury, ordering and interpreting medical tests, performing routine medical and surgical procedures, referring patients to other practitioners and managing health departments, institutions, projects and systems. A clinical officer observes, interviews and examines sick and healthy individuals in all specialties to determine and document their health status and applies relevant pathological, radiological, psychiatric and community health techniques, procedures and findings needed to classify diseases and related health problems and to establish a provisional or final diagnosis upon which to prescribe, initiate, carry out or terminate treatment or therapy based on their specialized knowledge, skills and experience in clinical pharmacology, use of clinical guidelines, best practices and disease patterns as well as individual patient and community characteristics

AMOs are allowed to do all of the above plus surgery including cesarean sections. COs are legally prohibited from doing cesarean sections.

Both COs and AMOs may prescribe medicine.

Maintaining Role:

There is no required Continuing Medical Education/Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Providers are just required to renew the license each year.

Job Opportunities:

In Tanzania there are more than 5000 clinical officers practicing. As of September 2021 there will be 7198 graduates from the CO programs.

References:

1. Beard, J. H.; Oresanya, L. B.; Akoko, L.; Mwanga, A.; Mkony, C. A.; Dicker, R. ASurgical task-shifting in a low-resource setting: Outcomes after major surgery performed by nonphysician clinicians in Tanzania. World Journal of Surgery 2014;38(6):1398-1404
2. Rick, Tara J. MPAS, PA-C; Moshi, Doreen D. AMO The Tanzanian assistant medical officer, Journal of the American Academy of Physician Assistants: April 2018 - Volume 31 - Issue 4 - p 43-47. doi: 10.1097/01.JAA.0000531051.04879.59
3. Sirili N, Anaeli A, Mselle L, Nyongole O, Massawe S. " ... we were like tourists in the theatre, the interns assisted almost all procedures ... " Challenges facing the assistant medical officers training for the performance of caesarean section delivery in Tanzania. BMC Med Educ. 2021 Jan 25;21(1):72. doi: 10.1186/s12909-020-02480-z. PMID: 33494731; PMCID: PMC7831162.
4. Scope of Practice Laws Affecting ART Initiation and Maintenance in Tanzania. Accessed March 3, 2021. https://globalhealth.uw.edu/sites/default/files/AIDS_Law_Brief-Scope_of_Practice_Laws_Affecting_NIMART_in_Tanzania.pdf

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN TANZANIA OFFERING CLINICAL OFFICER

No.	NAME	ADDRESS	OWNER
1.	CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE MTWARA	Mtwara District Council – Mtwara	

2.	Masasi Clinical Officers Training Centre	Masasi District Council – Mtwara	
3.	CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE SONGEA	Songea District Council – Ruvuma	
4.	Njombe Institute of Health and Allied Sciences (njihas)	Njombe District Council – Njombe	
5.	DENTAL THERAPISTS TRAINING CENTRE TANGA	Tanga City Council – Tanga –	
6.	MBEYA COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Mbeya City Council – Mbeya	
7.	School of Dental Therapists Mbeya	Mbeya City Council – Mbeya	
8.	LUGALO MILITARY MEDICAL SCHOOL –	Kinondoni Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	
9.	CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE KIGOMA	Ujiji Municipal Council – Kigoma	
10.	KILOSA CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE	Kilosa District Council – Morogoro	
11.	KIBAHA COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES	Kibaha District Council – Pwani	
12.	Primary Health Care Institute	Iringa Municipal Council – Iringa	

13.	CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE SUMBAWANGA	Sumbawanga Municipal Council – Rukwa	
14.	CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE MUSOMA	Musoma District Council – Mara	
15.	KCMC Amo General School	Moshi Municipal Council – Kilimanjaro	
16.	AMO TRAINING CENTRE TANGA	Tanga City Council – Tanga	
17.	Clinical Officers Training Centre Mafinga	Mafinga Town Council – Iringa	
18.	CENTRE FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN HEALTH ARUSHA	Arusha City Council – Arusha	
19.	CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE MUSOMA –	Musoma District Council – Mara	
20.	Clinical Officers Training Centre Maswa	Maswa District Council – Simiyu	
21.	Clinical Officers Training Centre Lindi	Lindi Municipal Council – Lindi	

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN TANZANIA OFFERING CLINICAL OFFICER

NO.	COLLEGE NAME	ADDRESS	REGISTRATION NUMBER
------------	---------------------	----------------	--------------------------------

1.	MGAO HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE	Njombe District Council – Njombe	REG/HAS/141
2.	NEW MKOMBOZI HEALTH INSTITUTE	Kyela District Council – Mbeya	REG/HAS/189P
3.	MUSOMA UTALII TRAINING COLLEGE	Tabora Municipal Council – Tabora	REG/ANE/034
4.	MKOLANI FOUNDATION HEALTH SCIENCES TRAINING INSTITUTE	Nyamagana Municipal Council – Mwanza	REG/HAS/169
5.	CITY COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES	Temeke Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	REG/HAS/139
6.	KAM COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Kinondoni Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	REG/HAS/104
7.	KAHAMA COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Kahama Town Council – Shinyanga	REG/HAS/171
8.	RUBYA HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE () – FBO	Muleba District Council – Kagera	REG/HAS/017
9.	RAO HEALTH TRAINING CENTRE	Rorya District Council – Mara	REG/HAS/110P
10.	FURAHA HEALTH TRAINING COLLEGE	Sumbawanga Municipal Council – Rukwa	REG/HAS/182P)

11.	HAYDOM INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES () – FBO	Mbulu District Council – Manyara	REG/HAS/006
12.	MSONGOLA HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE	Ilala Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	REG/HAS/178
13.	DECCA COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES – DODOMA	Dodoma Municipal Council – Dodoma	REG/HAS/142
14.	K’S ROYAL COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Mbeya District Council – Mbeya	REG/HAS/135
15.	KISARE COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Serengeti District Council – Mara	REG/HAS/067
16.	MVUMI INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Chamwino District Council – Dodoma	REG/HAS/011
17.	TANDABUI INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY	Nyamagana Municipal Council – Mwanza	REG/HAS/117
18.	TANZANIAN TRAINING CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL HEALTH	Kilombero District Council – Morogoro	REG/HAS/003
19.	BESHA HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE	Tanga City Council – Tanga	REG/HAS/118
20.	UYOLE HEALTH SCIENCES INSTITUTE	Mbeya City Council – Mbeya	REG/HAS/172

21.	FARAJA HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE	Moshi District Council – Kilimanjaro	REG/HAS/167
22.	ILEMBULA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES	Njombe District Council – Njombe	REG/HAS/005
23.	TABORA INSTITUTE	Nzega District Council – Tabora	REG/HAS/157
24.	NDOLAGE INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES – FBO	Muleba District Council – Kagera	REG/HAS/009
25.	KARATU HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE – FBO	Karatu District Council – Arusha	REG/HAS/113
26.	PARADIGMS COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Kinondoni Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	REG/BMG/033
27.	ST. BAKHITA HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE () – FBO	Nkasi District Council – Rukwa	REG/HAS/066
28.	CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE MUSOMA – Government	Musoma District Council – Mara	REG/HAS/033
29.	MACHAME HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE– FBO	Hai District Council – Kilimanjaro	REG/HAS/087
30.	MLIMBA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCE – Private	Kilombero District Council – Morogoro	REG/HAS/185P

31.	ST. AUGUSTINE MUHEZA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCE FBO	Muheza District Council – Tanga	REG/HAS/088
32.	SENGEREMA HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE – FBO	Sengerema District Council – Mwanza	REG/HAS/056
33.	ST. JOHN COLLEGE OF HEALTH	Mbeya City Council – Mbeya	REG/HAS/126
34.	RUKWA COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Sumbawanga Municipal Council – Rukwa	REG/HAS/180P
35.	BULONGWA HEALTH SCIENCES INSTITUTE – FBO	Makete District Council – Njombe	REG/HAS/053
36.	CHATO COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY	Chato District Council – Geita	REG/HAS/158
37.	ELIJERRY TRAINING CENTRE	Muheza District Council – Tanga	REG/HAS/173
38.	KIGAMBONI CITY COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES	Temeke Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	REG/HAS/168
39.	CLINICAL OFFICERS TRAINING CENTRE BUMBULI ()	Lushoto District Council – Tanga	REG/HAS/073

40.	AMENYE HEALTH TRAINING INSTITUTE ()	Mbeya City Council – Mbeya	REG/HAS/134
41.	ST. DAVID COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Kinondoni Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	REG/HAS/170
42.	MUYOGE COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES AND MANAGEMENT	Mafinga Town Council – Iringa	REG/HAS/176
43.	SUYE HEALTH INSTITUTE	Arusha District Council – Arusha	REG/HAS/112
44.	KOLANDOTO COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES - FBO	Shinyanga District Council – Shinyanga	REG/HAS/008
45.	EXCELLENT COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES – DAR ES SALAAM	Kinondoni Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	REG/BTP/026
46.	VICTORIA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES	Ilemela Municipal Council – Mwanza	REG/HAS/151
47.	TOSAMAGANGA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES – FBO	Iringa Municipal Council – Iringa	REG/HAS/020
48.	ST. AGGREY COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCE	Mbeya City Council – Mbeya	REG/HAS/116P
49.	TUMAINI JIPYA MEDICAL TRAINING COLLEGE	Mafinga Town Council – Iringa	REG/HAS/144

50.	NKINGA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH SCIENCES	Igunga District Council – Tabora	REG/HAS/013
51.	PADRE PIO COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES	Temeke Municipal Council – Dar es Salaam	REG/HAS/186
52.	ZANZIBAR SCHOOL OF HEALTH	Mjini District – Zanzibar Urban/West	REG/HAS/123