

Somaliland: The Clinical Health Officer

Author Profile:

Khalid Omar has a Master’s of Public Health and a post graduate diploma with a focus in teaching and education. He is an experienced lecturer in the field of Health Sciences and head of the Department of Public Health at Admas University. Omar has a long history of working in Public Health and Research Projects. He is skilled in data entry, data analysis, data collection, report writing, and SPSS. Omar is also actively involved with several Water Sanitation and Hygiene projects in Somaliland.



General Information:

Somaliland is in the Horn of Africa bordered by Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991. This fact still goes unrecognized by many despite Somaliland having a democracy and regular elections. Somaliland provides its people with opportunities and has its own army, police, and coast guard as well as its own currency.^{1,2} Somaliland strives to bring healthcare to its people and has many training programs especially for Clinical Health Officers. Formerly a British protectorate, Somaliland still has relations with the UK.³ The Clinical Health Officer profession started in 2010. The UK has helped with the budget of the National Clinical Officer’s Training Curriculum. Sometimes the profession is known as Clinical Officers, Clinical Health Officers, or Clinical Public Health Officers.

Entry Criteria:

Students may enter the training program by applying to the university and achieving a 60% score or better on the university entrance exam administered by the Examination Division. The Somaliland Secondary School Certificate is a pre-requisite for entry. There are no other clinical requirements for entry to enter the Clinical Health Officers program.

Education:

There are many schools that teach Clinical Health Officers. Admas University is one university that trains Clinical Health Officers: <https://www.admasuniversity.com>. The training is 3 years and includes an

internship. At the end of the training the students graduate with a Bachelor's degree. Approximately 100 students graduate each year. The training encompasses clinical and public health topics. The training aims to help with achieving the Sustainable Developmental Goals needed for the country.

Financing Education:

Financing of the education is primarily the students' responsibility; however, Somaliland Ministry of Education and Higher Education provide free scholarship to a limited number of secondary school students every year. Scholarship may be offered for the top ten Secondary School graduates and Secondary School graduates from various regional orphanage home sand children of SOYAAL War Veterans.

Accrediting/Regulatory Bodies:

The accrediting body for the Clinical Health Officers is the Ministry of Education.
8, Lane 216, Abu Baker Al Siddiq Road, Durya, 26-June,
Hargeisa, 90602

<https://moe.govsomaliland.org>

The regulatory body for the profession is the National Health Professions Regulatory Commission.

Gobolka (ex-ministry of interior building)

26 June Hargeisa, Somaliland

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The Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Health (MOH) and Ministry of Labour (MOL) do not work together to support the profession; however, they recognize the profession.

Professional Licensure:

The profession is not licensed and there is no board examination. Currently, there is no searchable database to locate Clinical Health Officers.

Scope of Practice:

Clinical Health Officers treat common communicable diseases in Somaliland. They take history and physical examinations, formulate differential diagnosis, and provide treatment and care support to patients as well as administer prescriptions. They are involved in community health projects and public health such as water, sanitation projects. They practice independently without a supervising physician. They do not perform surgeries alone though.

Maintaining Role:

Each year the Clinical Health Officer must complete 18 hours of Continuing Professional Development/Continuing Medical Education. The Ministry of Education tracks and keeps record of this. There is no recertification exam for the profession.

Job Opportunities:

Jobs for the profession are plentiful. There is no exact census of how many providers are practicing. Some of the providers are working for government sectors and some for non-governmental organizations. Others are able to cross into Ethiopia to obtain work as well.

References:

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3. Somaliland | historical region, Africa | Britannica. Accessed April 22, 2021.
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