Dedicated to Saving Lives:

An Interview with Dr. Simon Kibrom



By: Merina Paulos

Eritrea's progress is built on the dedication of citizens who channel their knowledge, skills, and hard work into national development. These individuals are committed to serving their society over and above performing their professional duties. Dr. Simon Kibrom - a young and passionate medical doctor whose journey reflects perseverance, academic excellence, and an unwavering desire to help others - talks here about his educational path, his clinical experience in maternal health, and his aspirations for the future.

Please introduce yourself to our reader.

I was born in 1996 in Adi Arkay, located in the Emni Hayli subzone of the Southern region. My whole student life is characterized by hard work and high scores. I started my student life at Kidsti Hana Kindergarten and then attended Mendefera Elementary School, Orota Junior School, and Awet Capuchino Secondary School. In 2014, I went to Warsay Yekalo Secondary School in Sawa to attend 12th grade and train in preparation for my national service. I worked diligently on my studies and scored a 4.0 on the national matriculation examination. I wanted to be a doctor, so I joined Orota School of Medicine and Dentistry, where I spent six years to earn my medical degree.

What motivated you to pursue a career in medicine?

The main reason I decided to become a doctor was my deep desire to help sick people— those in urgent need of someone capable of relieving them of their pain, suffering, and fear. With God's guidance, a physician is in a unique position to bring comfort and healing to those in need. Furthermore, my family was exceptionally supportive throughout my studies, and their encouragement pushed me toward my goal.

How important was the role of your family in your academic success?

My parents served as the foundation of my success from kindergarten through my graduation in college. Although neither of my parents had the opportunity to complete formal schooling, they understood the immense value of education and placed great emphasis on it. Studying medicine for six years requires a lot of patience, energy and sacrifice. Throughout those long years, my parents stood by me, encouraging me psychologically every step of the way. I owe them a lot for their enduring support.

When and where did you begin your official medical career?

Following my six years of medical training and one-year mandatory national service, my career as a general practitioner officially began at the Mendefera Referral Hospital in 2021—right at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. That was a very special moment for me because I was able to begin my dream career in my home region. By the grace of God, everything went smoothly during my first days on the job. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Habte Haylemelekot and Dr. Dawit Serqe, whose mentorship and encouragement had a profound and positive influence on my career early on.

Could you share some highlights of your clinical work in the maternity ward?

I have been working in the maternity ward at Mendefera since December 2021. Over these past three years, I have been actively involved in a wide range of emergency and routine obstetric and gynecological procedures. To date, I have participated in 1,120 major obstetric and gynecological operations. This includes 896 caesarean sections, 23 ovarian surgeries (including cases of ectopic pregnancy and ovarian cysts), 11 uterine rupture repairs, 5 peripartum abdominal hysterectomies, 13 cervical cerclage procedures for cervical incompetence, and 17 fourthdegree perineal tear repairs. Additionally, I have been actively involved in managing 148 other operations, including 65 transvaginal hysterectomies for uterine prolapse, 25 trans-abdominal hysterectomies, 48 obstetric fistula repairs, 7 myomectomies, 10

appendectomies, 3 incisional hernia repairs, and numerous other minor gynecological procedures.

What are your plans for the future?

After serving in Mendefera, I have now moved to Asmara to begin a four-year post-graduate specialization program in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Orota National Referral Hospital. My primary goal is to advance my clinical expertise so that I can serve our people at an even higher level. The ultimate objective of our healthcare community is to reduce maternal mortality and safeguard the health of both mothers and children. I aim to sharpen my knowledge and skills to provide the safest, highest-quality care possible for our citizens. Beyond the hospital walls, how else do you contribute to the community? Being a doctor is not confined to hospital working hours. Medical emergencies can happen anywhere and at any time. Whether in our neighborhoods or during various community settings, we often provide medical assistance outside the clinical environment whenever needed, free of charge. Because health emergencies and childbirth can occur unexpectedly, we consider it our duty to assist people wherever we are.

How would you describe the trend regarding maternal health and mortality?

The core target of our healthcare initiatives is to reduce maternal mortality nationwide. Doctors and healthcare professionals across the country are working tirelessly to ensure safe deliveries and healthy newborns. Today, we are seeing very encouraging results. Maternal mortality has decreased significantly, and the expansion of hospitals and health clinics into remote areas has made regular antenatal care—such as third, sixth, and seventh-month checkups—much more accessible for pregnant women.

What message would you like to share with students and the general public?

To students working hard to achieve their goals: keep pushing forward. The path to becoming a medical doctor is long and challenging, so it requires patience and perseverance because achieving anything truly worthwhile demands sacrifice. Given that our government provides free education, removing financial burdens for many years of training, it is our moral duty to give back and serve anyone who needs us. To the general public, my advice is simple: listen to your body. If you experience any abnormal symptoms, visit your local clinic or hospital as soon as possible. Minor issues can quickly escalate if ignored. You know your body

better than anyone, and taking charge of your health is the first step to wellbeing.

Any acknowledgments?

First and foremost, I am profoundly grateful to our government for providing free, accessible education without financial barriers. I am deeply thankful to my parents, who made enormous sacrifices to support me throughout my journey. I also want to express my heartfelt appreciation to my wife, who stands by me through every challenge of my work and provides constant emotional support. Finally, thank you for taking the time to share my story.

Eritrea Pofile

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