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TURKMENISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Cooperation Guarantees Better Care

USAID program links family physicians with laboratory specialists for better health care results



Photo: AbrAssociates\ZdravPlus Project

A participant looks through the microscope during the joint laboratory and primary health care training course in hematology.

Family physicians and laboratory specialists are working together to diagnose health problems more effectively and accurately and to ensure that patients receive the care they need.

Saodat Romanova – a laboratory physician at House of Health #5 in Turkmenabat, recalls how recently, her diagnostic skills helped to reverse an erroneous and alarming diagnosis. A six-year-old boy from Lebap Velayat, Turkmenistan, was taken to his family physician by his parents, who were concerned by their son’s lack of appetite and lethargic behavior. The boy was referred to a specialist for consultation, and an oncologist determined that the boy had leukemia. Distraught, the parents sought a second opinion from Romanova, who was able to give much better news.

After reevaluating the laboratory tests, Romanova determined that the boy was indeed sick. However, his lethargy and lack of appetite were the result of anemia, a relatively common and easily treatable condition. Romanova credits her success to a training course on hematology that USAID organizes for laboratory and family physicians throughout Turkmenistan.

USAID has been working since 2002 to strengthen the capacity of laboratory workers in Turkmenistan’s health care system. Additionally, USAID has been strengthening the link between laboratory and family physicians. A viable cooperation between these two groups of health care providers helps ensure that family physicians order the right laboratory tests, make correct diagnoses, and prescribe the most appropriate treatment.

The USAID-supported training module emphasizes the relationship between family physicians and laboratory specialists, with a focus on how the two groups should work together to ensure that appropriate blood tests are performed and interpreted correctly. The process promotes a better understanding of the complementary role that doctors and laboratory technicians play in the health care system. Because both groups are able to put their new skills into practice in a mutually supportive fashion, careful laboratory analysis, and evidence-based diagnosis and treatment are now linked, ensuring better health outcomes for all.

Telling Our Story
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