



LORETO HEALTH SERVICES

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*Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do.
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

January 31, 2020

Dear Friends,

We have just completed another successful year of our Epilepsy Management Program conducted at our clinic in Makeni and our outreach locations throughout Sierra Leone. The attached 2019 report details these efforts.

We could not do this work without your support and we are very grateful for your assistance and encouragement. As the report shows, we have seen a sharp increase in visits to our static clinic in Makeni. We are known for providing good quality anti-epileptic medication and our patients spread the message about the availability of treatment and the management of the disease. Controlling the seizures allows children to attend school and thrive and many of our adult patients can hold down jobs and provide for their families.

We are pleased that there is an increasing awareness about epilepsy and we thank God for the growing change in our society that those with epilepsy are no longer considered to be possessed with the “devils.” Due to this, however, we do anticipate a continued growth in the number of patients seeking treatment. This will put a strain on our resources and we will continue to need your support.

As you know, our biggest needs are medications and transportation costs. We continue our outreach program in remote villages, but in addition, in order to properly manage cases at our static clinic in Makeni, we must send out health workers to follow-up with patients who fail to report back to the clinic. We also maintain our epilepsy awareness efforts in Makeni and our outreach villages.

We are encouraged with the recent World Health Organization Report on Epilepsy and their call to designate this disease as a public health priority. Epilepsy has always been a priority at Loreto Health Services and together with your continued support we will be able to further our efforts to bring many more patients out of the shadows.

With kind regards,

Sr. Philomena Joseph,
Clinic-Coordinator

Loreto Health Services

Outpatient & Outreach Epilepsy Program



BACKGROUND

Loreto Health Services has been at the forefront of providing epilepsy care in Sierra Leone since 1997. Approximately 5,000 epilepsy patients are under our care.

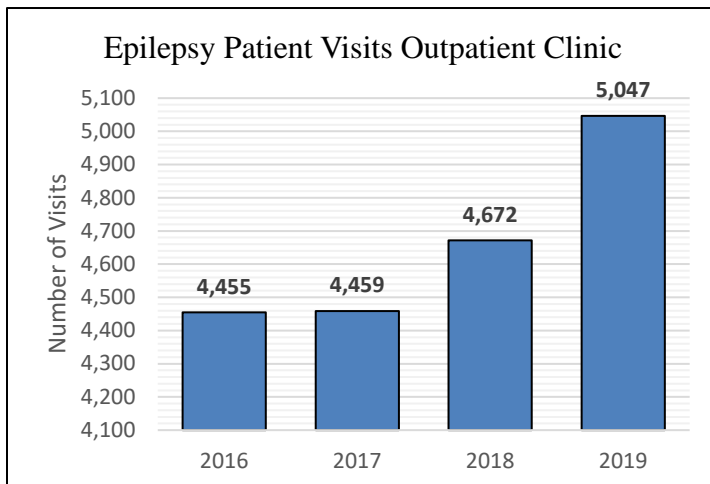
The Loreto Health Services outpatient clinic in Makeni is where the majority of patients with epilepsy are diagnosed, treated and monitored. They may report on any day of the week and receive anti-epileptic medicines on a monthly basis. If the patient lives far from the clinic, a two-month supply of medicine will be given depending on his/her commitment to the treatment. A field worker is responsible for follow-up with any defaulters.

Caring for someone with epilepsy is not easy and our personnel educate family, friends, teachers, and guardians who are directly involved in taking care of the patients. Due to the stigma and discrimination often associated with epilepsy seizures, personnel also visit schools, markets, mosques, churches and villages to sensitize the community about the disease. Many still believe that epilepsy seizures are contagious or a demonic possession. For people living with epilepsy, Loreto Health Services staff give whatever support to alleviate their sufferings.

In addition to the services provided at the clinic in Makeni, outreach services are offered at four locations throughout Sierra Leone. These areas are in critical need of help, however, providing services is very challenging due to the remoteness of the locations and the difficulty in ensuring patients follow their medication regimen. At times turnout is low but quarterly outreach is continued in to encourage patients to take their medication so that their seizures can be reduced. As at our clinic in Makeni, education of family and community regarding epilepsy is a key component of our efforts.

An estimated 60,000 – 100,000 Sierra Leonians suffer from epilepsy. A recent WHO Epilepsy report indicates that nearly three-quarters of those, in countries like Sierra Leone, do not receive the treatment they need to control epilepsy. Therefore, there is a need to expand our outpatient and outreach efforts. Additional funding, however, is needed for transportation and staff allowances in order to reach more of those in need.

CURRENT EPILEPSY EFFORTS - 2019



Since 2016, follow-up and new epilepsy patient visits at the outpatient clinic in Makeni have increased by 13%.

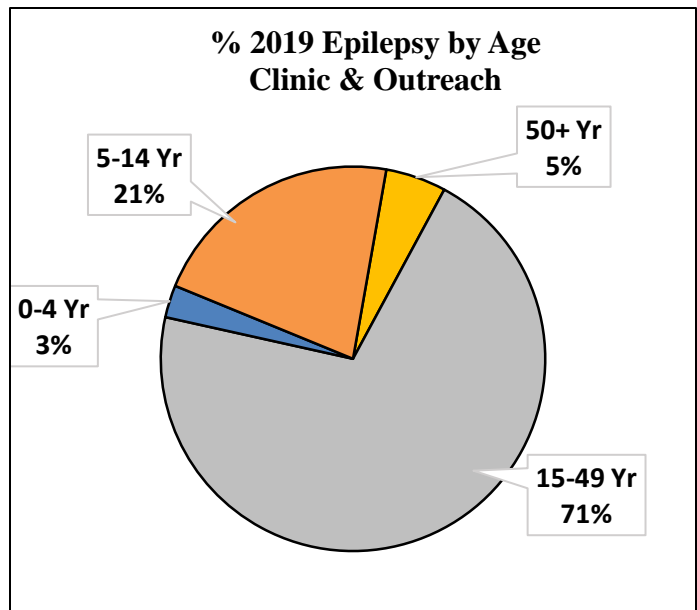
This increase can be attributed to a rise in awareness, referrals from other facilities and our reputation in providing quality epilepsy treatment.

In 2019, epilepsy visits were 22% of all outpatient visits treated at the clinic. Of these visits 52% were female and 48% men.

At outreach locations, 1,250 follow-up and new visits were conducted. These represented 20% of all Loreto epilepsy cases. Opposite the clinic at Makeni, outreach locations recorded 52% men and 48% women patient visits.

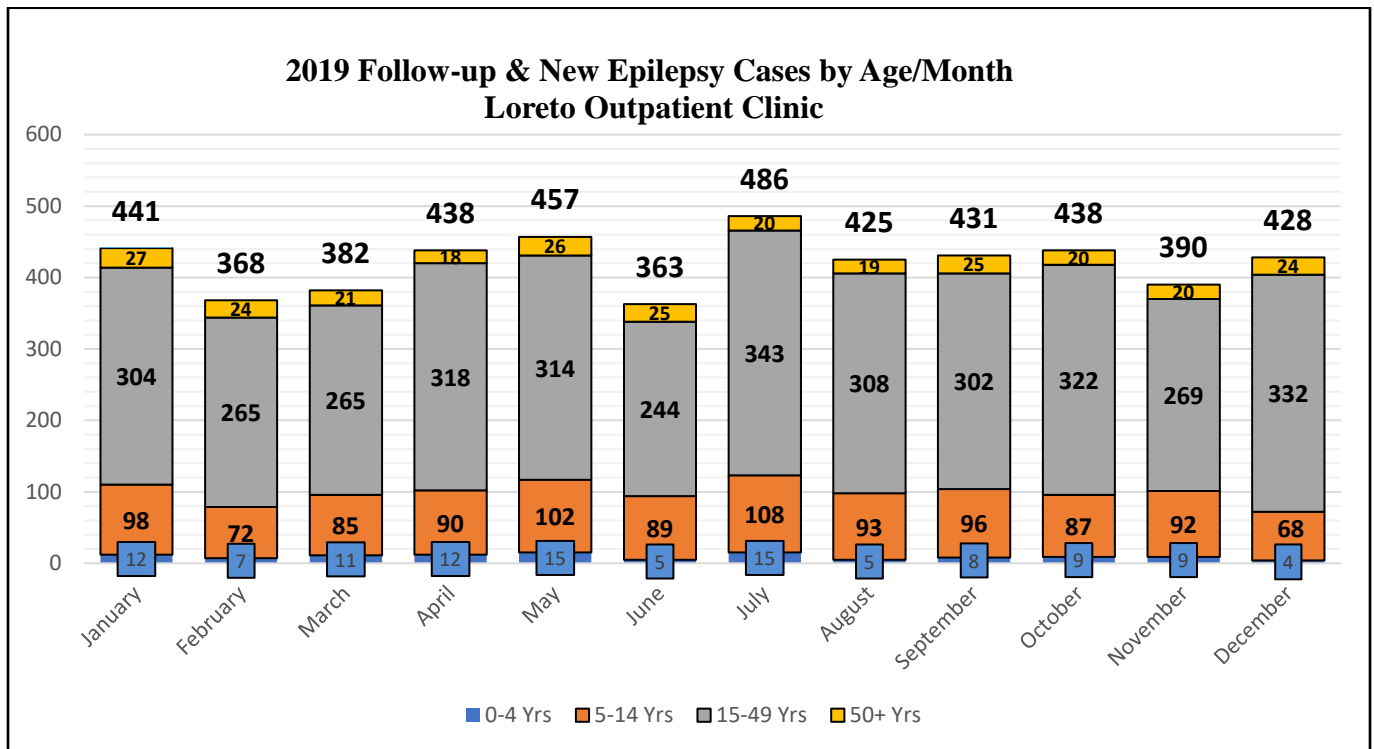
Not surprisingly, the largest age category treated by both clinic and outreach is between the ages of 15-49 – 71%.

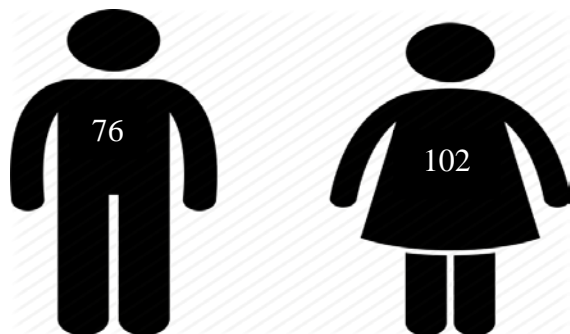
A critical age population to reach and treat are young school age children. Combining both clinic and outreach services, 21% treated are from 5-14 years of age. Without treatment many children who suffer from seizures will not attend school.



Loreto Health Services - Makeni Outpatient Services

The outpatient clinic in Makeni sees a significant number of epilepsy cases each month. The total number of follow-up and new visits in 2019 was 5,047. In the age group 15-49 years of age, 26 are pregnant women – a very high-risk category. In addition, the under-5 population requires special attention and in 2019 there was a total of 112 under-5 cases at the outpatient clinic in Makeni.





While not all epilepsy patients require mental health services, they are available at Loreto Health Services.

In 2019, there was a total of 178 follow-up and new mental health cases at the facility.

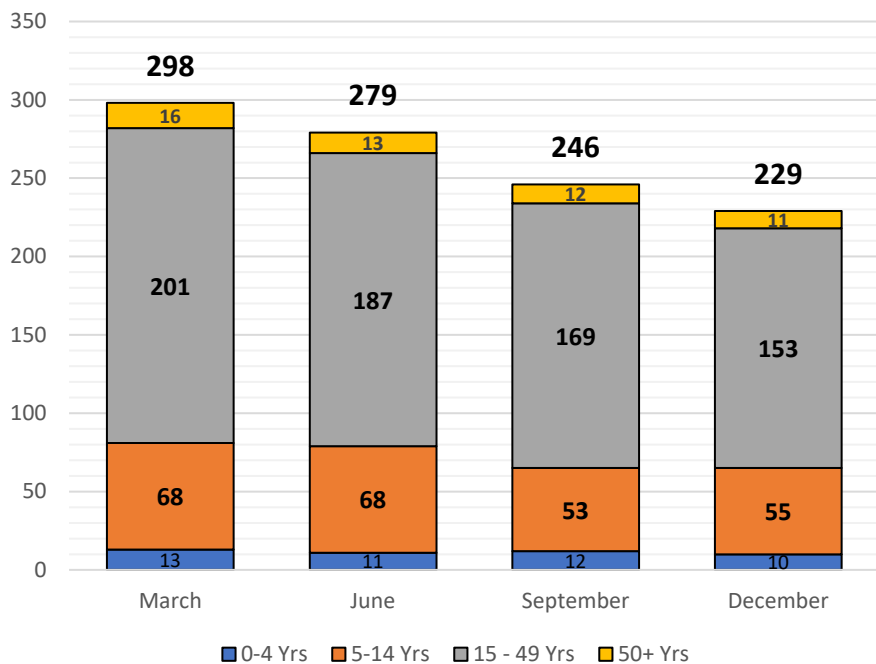
Loreto Health Services – Outreach Services

Moyamba District Outreach

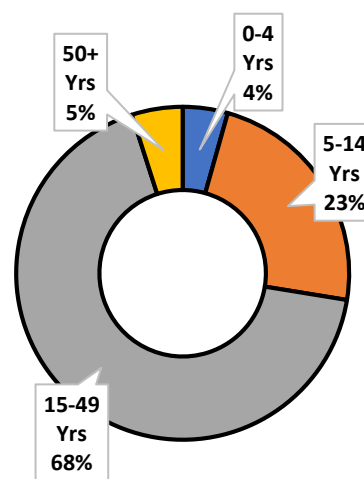
A team from Loreto Health Services-Makeni conducts outreach in the Moyamba District four times a year – March, June, September & December. The three facilities visited are: St. Joseph’s Epilepsy Clinic in Moyamba, Health Center at Njala University and Rutile/Moriba town.

Patients are provided medicines for three months. Outreach visits are conducted on the weekends and require significant staff support and resources. In addition, the outreach locations are over 145 kilometers from Makeni and road conditions can be difficult at times.

2019 Follow-up & New Epilepsy Cases by Age/Month
Moyamba District Outreach



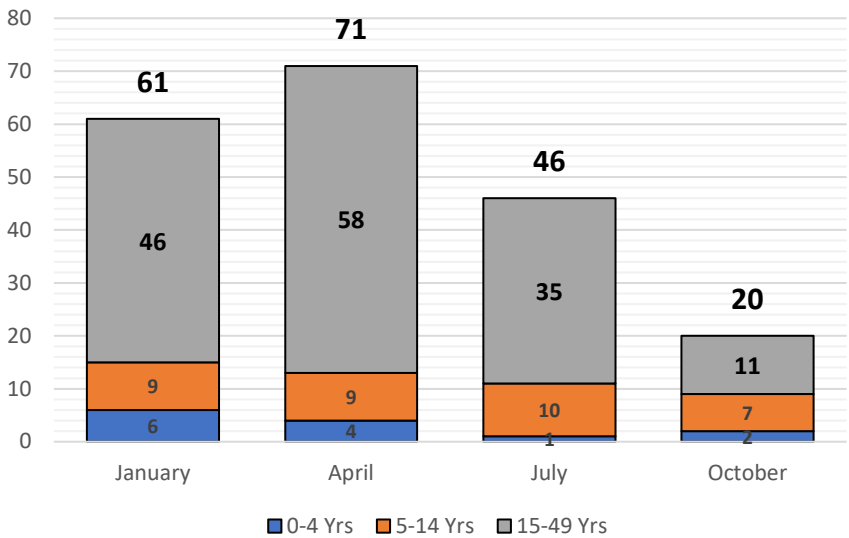
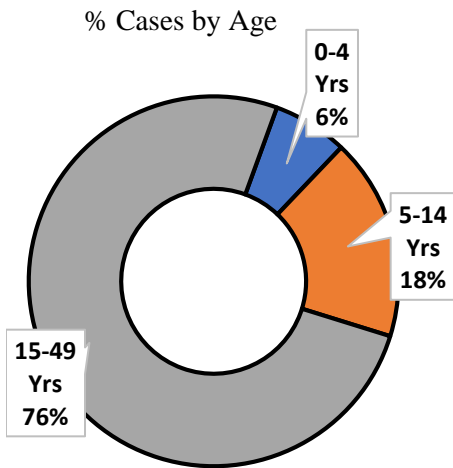
% Cases by Age



Lungi & Lokomasama Outreach

A team from Loreto Health Services-Makeni conducts outreach at Lungi & Lokomasama four times a year – January, April, July and October. Patients are provided medicines for three months. These outreach areas are approximately 130 kilometers from Makeni.

2019 Follow-up & New Epilepsy Cases by Age/Month
Lungi & Lokomasama Outreach



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