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ALBANIA

CASE STUDY

Bringing Pediatric Guidelines to Albania

Publication by Albanian pediatricians enables doctors to provide better treatment



Photo: World Learning \ Jugera Bilali

Sadeta Noka (left) receives the new pediatric Clinical Practice Guidelines from Margarita Rumano

“The new and unified guidelines for pediatricians are serving as a model whereby guidelines will be unified and updated for hospital patients of all ages,” explains Georgina Kuli-Lito, head of the Albanian Pediatric Society who spearheaded this initiative.

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Challenge

Infant mortality in Albania, at 15 per 1,000 births, is three times that of other European countries. Pediatricians throughout Albania often face the daunting task of diagnosing and treating various children’s ailments without the proper medical supplies. Moreover, physicians in different districts sometimes treat the same illnesses differently. Treatment guidelines have existed, but have not been obligatory. In the absence of clear and unified guidelines, sick children have not always received the best treatment. Lacking the proper medicine, some doctors tried various alternatives; others did nothing.

Initiative

The Albanian Pediatric Society decided to devote its 10th annual conference to the unification of guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of the most common serious children’s diseases. During the conference, well-respected Albanian as well as foreign experts presented epidemiological, clinical and treatment guidelines on how to treat various conditions in children such as acute respiratory tract infections, asthma, dehydration, seizures, certain infections, bacterial meningitis, fever of unknown source, infant nutrition, anemia, acute rheumatic fever, and immunodeficiency. USAID not only subsidized most of the conference costs but also introduced a new initiative to integrate post-partum family planning into the health care benefits that all Albanian mothers receive throughout the first year of the babies life. USAID also made it possible to publish the presentations so that pediatricians nation-wide could refer to the up-to-date information presented at the conference.

Results

Three-hundred and fifty copies of the clinical practice guidelines were published for all the pediatricians in Albania. In towns where doctors often do not have access to the internet, having such a publication to refer to in Albanian is invaluable. Now instead of relying on outmoded guidance or guessing what alternative might be appropriate in the absence of the usual medicine, doctors can refer to the publication and be sure that they are providing the best care under the circumstances.