

PREVENTION & CONTROL OF
NOMA IN NIGERIA



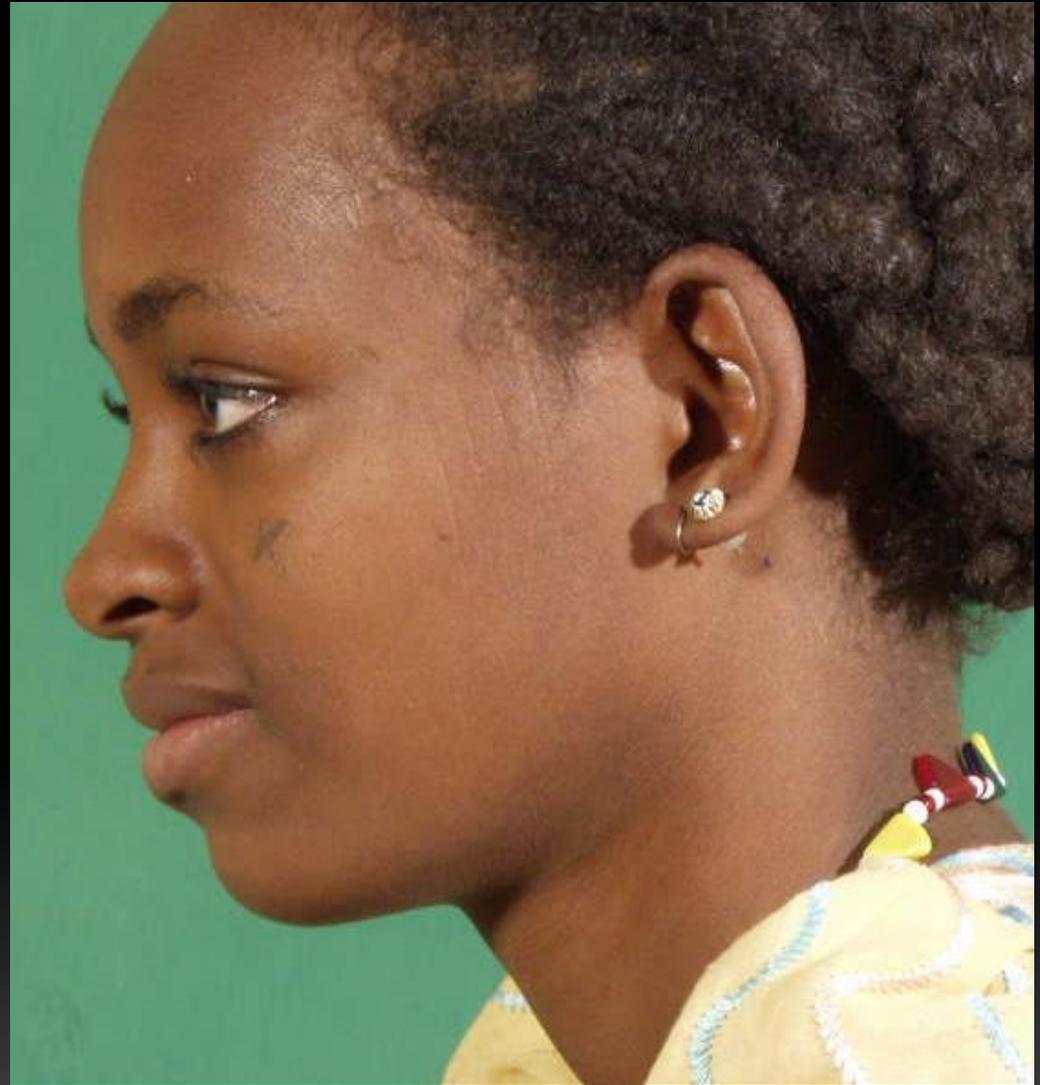
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#15 Doctor's Quarters G/Nama, Sokoto, Sokoto State, Nigeria

This young Nigerian woman is seeking curative surgery for a serious condition contracted in early childhood. She was born with no visible health problems, but due to malnutrition, an unsanitary environment and lack of access to timely medical care, she developed.....





Cancrum
oris, or
noma.

Most children
(70-90%) die in
the acute
phase of this
illness, but she
survived. Now
age 16, she is
being
evaluated for
surgery.



This disease is sometimes called the **face of poverty**. It arises in villages with extreme poverty, childhood malnutrition and lack of access to timely curative medical care. It usually appears in children under age 6, after recent overwhelming infection such as measles or malaria.

This flesh-eating infection begins in the lining inside of the child's mouth, then penetrates through the cheek, and also deep into the bones of the face.





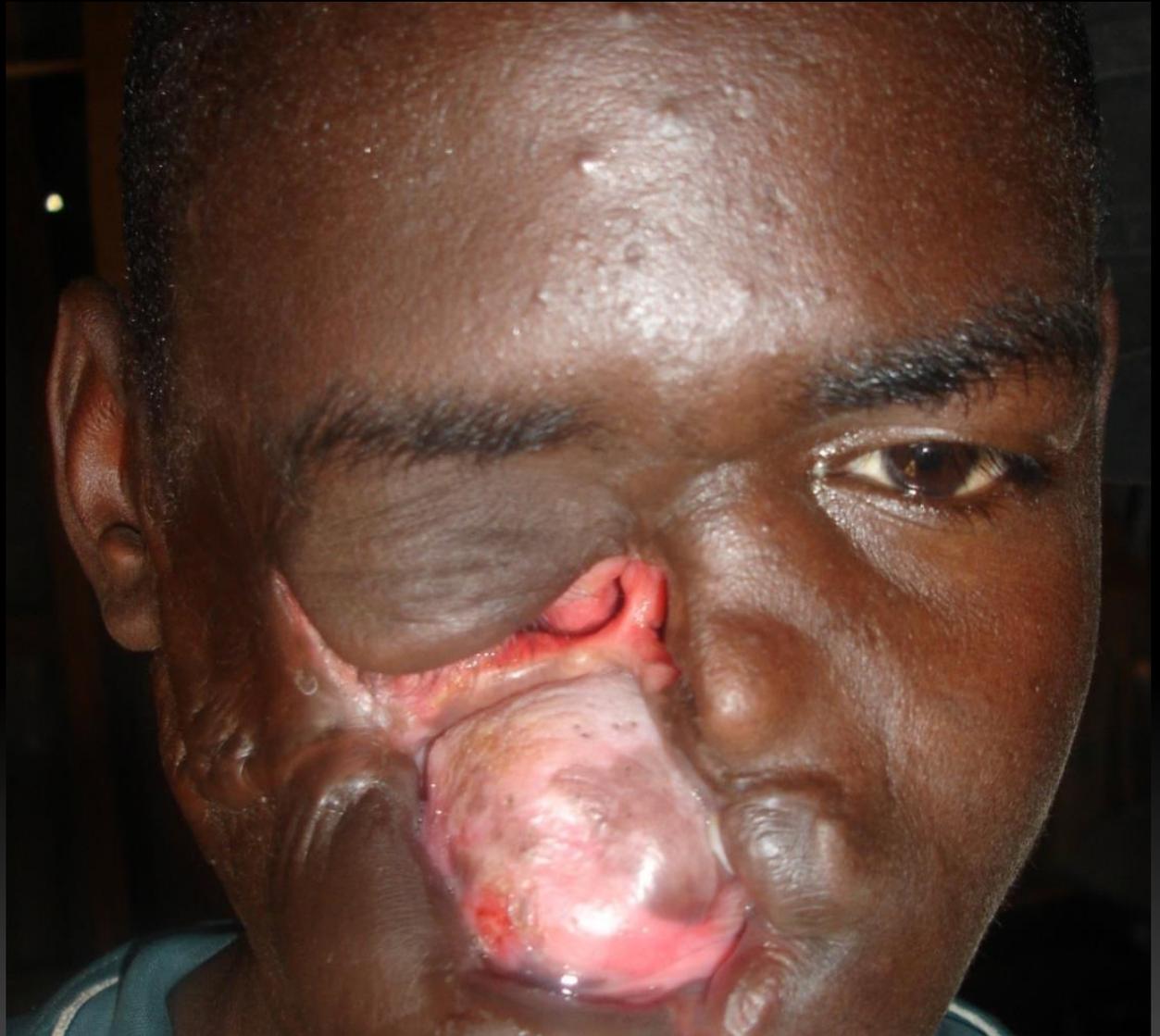
Once infection has lead to necrosis, or gangrene, the damage is permanent. A child's face may be grotesquely disfigured for life.

But if this infection is detected and treated early, inexpensive oral antibiotics could limit the severity of the disease.



Alhaji Nasiru explains to his son why we are here: to begin work in Nigeria to prevent noma. His son gives us permission to tell his story and share these pictures of him. He realizes the need to inform people of the problem of noma, for the purpose of raising awareness, and the funds to do the work. And , even though prevention of noma has come too late to help him, he thanks us.

Most of his life he has endured the ravages of this awful disease. He and his father are willing to do anything that will allow him a chance at a better life. "Whatever can possibly be done to help, we will be very grateful."





At fifteen, he has a long life ahead of him. He will certainly struggle, but has the will to do whatever it takes to live a meaningful life.



This little girl looks pretty and clean in her nice dress, but she is measurably severely malnourished by Mid Upper Arm Circumference

Indeed, the stigmata of malnutrition, the bloated belly, wasted arms and legs, and measurements of her height and weight confirm severe malnutrition.





But the sad face and the lethargy speak to us even before the chart tells us the verdict: this child needs nurture and better nutrition.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

That proverb comes to mind as we establish this new program in Nigeria. The dream of a few Nigerians and Americans is now owned by many partners.

Many more people will become part of the village that saves the child. Parents will learn to nurture better, and to seek care earlier. Primary health care workers will have incentives, training, and medicines to intervene early. International donors and local authorities will participate. People of faith will work and pray, and children with noma will struggle to survive, and thank us for doing our part to prevent other children from experiencing this disease.