

ADDIS ABABA FISTULA HOSPITAL

Quarterly Report October 2008

Opening of the Harar Hamlin Fistula Centre

The recently opened Harar Hamlin Fistula Centre. There were distinguished guests from Harar Regional Office and also partners of Hamlin Fistula International.

The Centre was built with funds from the Fistula Foundation in US together with the Tesfa Eneste Project which is founded by Ethiopians living in America. The Centre will treat fistula patients who come from Harar Region and also will cover the patients who have difficulty travelling from Eastern Ethiopia to Addis Ababa .



Ato Kassaye Kebede (US Fistula Foundation), W/O Abaynesh, Dr Hamlin and a Regional Official

The Centre cost about £400,000. It is the fourth Centre for the Hamlin Fistula Organization in Ethiopia . It has 1 doctor, 2 nurses and ten nurse aides plus guards, laundry workers and a kitchen. There is accommodation for up to 40 patients.

Our partners and the director for the Tesfa Eneste Project W/o (Mrs.) Abaynesh were at the opening and were here at the Hospital for an International meeting just prior to the opening of the Centre.



A view of the Harar Centre showing the distinct architectural character of the building in a typical Muslim city

A Patient's story

Tenagne is one of our patients from western Ethiopia; a region called Oromiya.

After the death of her father it was hard to survive with what they had, so she came to Addis Ababa to work as a domestic servant.

Tenagne was raped by her employer, became pregnant, and went back to the village without any money. Her mother took care of her during her pregnancy. After 3 days in labour she delivered a stillborn child in her mother's house, although the Health Care Centre was only 6 hours by foot from her village.

Tenagne was left with double fistula. Her mother died shortly afterwards and she was left with her younger brother and sisters. They complained about the smell and she moved out of the house. The neighbours helped with washing and providing food. She thought 'maybe, if I die, things might not be too hard for my brother and sisters'. I cannot blame them since I know the condition and the offensive smell that I have."



Tenagne

A neighbour told her that he could help her get a referral letter so that she could go to a hospital. After that she went to a Health Care Centre where they told her that the Provincial hospital in Sheno might be able to help her. In Sheno, the doctors told her she needed to go to Addis Ababa, because they could not treat her there.

She started begging money on the street when a nurse at the hospital saw her referral paper and told her not to beg on the street because people at the hospital would help her with her transport money (which is less than 2 US dollars).

"The nurse took me to her house thinking every one would accept me, but it was hard for her family and they started complaining about the smell and I had to find another place to stay."

Tenagne had a cousin who lived in that town but after staying for a week the same thing happened and she had to leave there too.

By this time they had gathered enough money and a man volunteered to escort her on her journey.

Physiotherapy

The number of patients has been increasing in recent years, so we will begin building a new physiotherapy wing beginning in early October with an anticipated opening in 2009. Our physiotherapist, Sr. Azeb Befekadu, said that the room currently used does not accommodate the number of patients and the necessary equipment. In addition, an examination room is required.

The plans are complete. The Unit will accommodate three exercise beds, with space for expansion. It will have an office where patients can be examined and assessed more privately, and possibly use electrolyte therapy. It will have its own toilet with access

for wheelchairs. There will be a new path for our patients to use without discomfort, there will be a store room. Of the patients admitted to our hospital about 10% will need this facility for exercise.

Training

We have upgraded our training programme to train nurses as well as doctors. Their training will cover all the projects that we have here in our compound. They include OR, Post operative care, Physiotherapy, and Stoma therapy. We have trained three doctors and five nurses including one public Health Officer, for six weeks.

Visit of AUSAID Director General

AUSAID Director General Bruce Davis came to Ethiopia to visit the Hospital.

AUSAID has supported the Hospital since its establishment in 1974, and the Director General has promised to continue this support in improving maternal and child health mortality; the main goal of the Millennium Development.



**Dr Hamlin, AUSAID Director Bruce Davis and
HE Dr TeowdrosAdhanom (Minister of Health)**

During his visit Mr. Davis met with Dr. Catherine Hamlin the co-founder of the Fistula Hospital and her staff . The Ethiopian Minister of Health, His Excellency Dr. Tewedros Adhanom was also present during the Director General's visit .

Desta Mender

Our work in Desta Mender is progressing well and the women who have been trained in dairy production are now generating a reasonable income. Milk is produced for use in the Hospital, and they are also producing butter and local cheese, which they sell at wholesale prices to the staff. With this income they are covering all production costs, paying something for their housing and then making a modest profit as income. Another 5 women have been trained to look after the chickens which produce our eggs. From 150 chickens we are now getting 120 eggs a day and soon we will increase to 450 chickens. These women are also generating income towards their cost of living. The changes have brought significant improvement in outlook for these womens' future. They are no longer dependent but working towards their own future well being. In the last month a small group of women have also been trained in basic home nursing, with the hope of gaining employment in an old persons nursing home. This will be another opportunity for these women to develop self reliance and dignity for their future.



One of the stunning vistas at Desta Mender

Outreach Centres

We received a patient who had a fistula for ten years. She is now twenty five years old. We asked her why she waited so long to come? She said that her family could not afford the transportation as we were too far from her home.

There have been improvements in the past five years because we are now closer to many of our patients by following the opening of our Outreach Centres where we can undertake surgery and provide treatment. In addition to our Bahir Dar, Mekelle and Yirga Alem Centres, we have opened the Harar Centre. This Centre will increase the number of patients that we will be treating annually and help us to assist the women in the east side of Ethiopia. This Centre will not only treat the patients in Ethiopia but also the fortunate ones who come from the adjacent country of Somalia.

Yirga Alem Patients



During the past three months we have treated 171 patients in Bahir Dar, 49 patients in Mekelle, and 95 in Yirgalem Centres . In Harar we have 40 Beds in the ward and also an operating room with physiotherapy, laundry and kitchen. The difficult cases will be referred to our main hospital in Addis. Our new doctor in Harar gains confidence and skills.

In the last 3 months we had 23 patients referred from our Outreach locations to the main Centre in Addis Ababa.

Prevention

In Ethiopia where about 2.9 million women give birth each year, about 9,000 mothers will develop obstetric fistula. Obstetric fistula can almost always be prevented. However, prevention depends as much on social change as on medical interventions. As Dr. Reginald Hamlin once said “prevention is the best thing, if we only had the money.”

Prevention would reduce the incidence of new injuries by focusing more on interventions that prevent maternal mortality and morbidity.

The Fistula Hospital for the past 4 years has focused on prevention. We have three public health officers in our Bahir Dar, Mekelle and Yirga Alem Fistula Centers. The health officers have been:-

1. Training Health extension for high risk identification and safe delivery; when and where to refer for the type of care provided to obstetric fistula patients, and how to prevent obstetric fistula. (There were 168 trained Health Extension Workers in Bahir Dar, 57 in Mekelle and 92 in Yirga Alem.)

2. Equipping health extension workers and Traditional Birth Attendants with basic delivery kits. (There were 5,550 delivery kits delivered.)

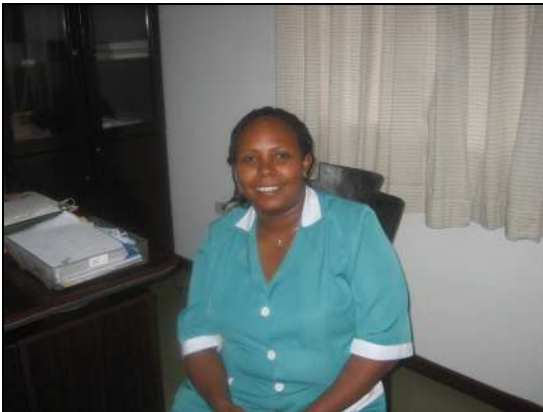
Public Health officers at the Hamlin Fistula Centres have trained 193 Traditional Birth Attendants in Bahir Dar, 81 in Mekelle and 78 in Yirga Alem.

There were also training programs for Health Officers, nurses/midwives and doctors.

The training was performed in different Weredas (local authorities) and Zones where the Hamlin Fistula Centres are located.

Fikirte Kebede — a staff member

Fikirte Kebede is the head of kitchen department at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. It has been ten years since she started working here. Fikirte started working at the guest house, looking after trainee doctors, our partners and guests of the hospital who would stay at the compound.



Fikirte

When our kitchen head Tiringo Demissee passed away three years ago, Fikirte became the head of the kitchen and now coordinates three departments .

She says that working in the kitchen is simple because of the team work and the accessible way the kitchen is set. “What makes it unique is everything is prepared here; bread, injera and stew (wot). Except for the products needed to make these foods nothing is purchased outside which makes it fresh and of quality.

The other difference is that you could easily see the effect of food and nutrition on the patients. Getting more nutritious food gives them strength. Even the ones that seem to be without hope, get well and start playing with friends or helping around in any way they can. This is what makes me satisfied in my job.”

Fikirte has three children, but still treats and talks to our patients and also looks after the twenty five employees in the kitchen like a mother. “I got married after I started working here and God has blessed me with my family and with my work at the Hospital.”



**Mamitu – a long standing employee
A Nurse Aide and competent Fistula Surgeon**

Hamlin College of Midwives

The Hamlin College of Midwives was excited to receive Preliminary Accreditation in early last quarter. The students enjoy practising their basic skills in the main hospital every Friday morning and commenced their first “Midwifery” clinical placement of 6 weeks in two locations in last July. We are very happy that Professor Barbara Kwast (Fistula Trust of the Netherlands) was with us at that time.



College Students and Sr Annette Bennett, the College Dean

The students have had a holiday and many made the long trip back to visit their families in the countryside. One student found that several people in the community came to hear about what she was studying. She explained that as Midwives they will help to reduce the incidence of obstetric fistula.



One of the College's Main Buildings



One of the Tutorial Rooms

After hearing about obstetric fistula one student's mother proceeded to explain about a woman in a nearby village who was ostracized from the community because she leaked urine.

The student and her mother made a trip the next day to find the woman. After explaining to the woman and her family that she could be cured they rallied the community together to help pay for her to take the transport to the Bahir Dar Fistula Centre to be repaired.

It is so exciting to see this small impact (not small for the lady!) that these young woman are already having in the communities where they will eventually serve as Midwives.

Drs. Reginald and Catherine Hamlin, both Gynecologists and Obstetricians, came to Ethiopia to work at the Princess Tsehai Memorial Hospital in 1959. They were pioneers in performing surgery for women suffering from obstetric fistula. Once they began this work, the need became so great that in 1974 they established the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital specifically for women with childbirth injuries.

The Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital is an organization that cares for women with childbirth and related injuries. These women come to us destitute in nothing but their urine soaked clothes, and more often than not on bare foot. Distanced by their relatives, we are their only hope; therefore all care, treatment and surgery is completely free of charge.

We are a registered charity in the Ministry of Justice and under the umbrella of the Federal Ministry of Health.