

ADDIS ABABA FISTULA HOSPITAL

Quarterly Report July 2009

Golden Jubilee Celebrations

Latest News

Five of our trustees have just returned from the Fistula Hospital where they had been joining in celebrations to mark 50 years of service to the fistula women in Ethiopia by the late Dr Reg Hamlin and his wife Dr Catherine Hamlin.



Dr Hamlin inviting everyone to 'light a candle for Africa'

In the words of Dr Reg Hamlin, he felt they were in Ethiopia to 'light a candle for Africa'

More news next time

Governor General of Australia pays a visit

Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, paid a visit to the hospital, accompanied by her husband and other Australian high officials. Her Excellency acknowledged the wonderful activities of the hospital to address the issue of childbirth injuries.



Her Excellency Quentin Bryce with Dr Hamlin

Medical News

We have been having regular medical audit meetings and presentations from members of the team on issues relating to their areas of work. **Sr Azeb**, our Physiotherapist, gave an excellent presentation. The new Physiotherapy building is now well under way and we look forward to its completion in September.

Dr Hailemariam and Sr Beza were able to travel to Northern Nigeria to attend a two week exchange visit with **Dr Kees Waaldijk**. This was an excellent time for them and on their return they presented to our staff issues of interest from their visit. We plan that **Dr Habte** and another member of the team will visit later in the year.

Desta Mender—Joy Village

The most exciting recent event has been the opening of our **Juniper Café**.



Juniper Café in action

We invited many guests to come and celebrate with us as we opened this new facility. It will give our women trained in catering the opportunity to use their skills and build confidence interacting with the public.



Mrs Rae Newman in Juniper Café

Mrs Rae Newman and all our team worked hard to get the facilities and the women ready for the opening. It was a wonderful day and the Café has been serving the public each weekend since.

We have had day conferences in our meeting room by the lake and we would like to further develop this facility using the wonderful resources that we have.

We have started training on a grinding mill project using existing equipment and we hope to produce “Shiro and Berbery” for us to sell in the local markets.

Outreach Centres

Our main hospital has been receiving patients from all over the country for the past 3 decades. Recent records have showed that many of the patients here have come from southern and western parts of Ethiopia.

If someone asks why the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital has more patients from these regions, the answer will be an encouraging one. Our outreach centres in the northern and eastern parts are functioning well, so they are able to help patients in their regions, therefore only a very few patients with complex cases are sent to us on a referral basis. This means that we are having fewer patients from northern and eastern parts of the country.

Our **Yirga Alem Centre** is busy with many patients arriving from the **Sidama** coffee growing region. The south western area of the country also have a great need. With this in mind, we are hoping to finalize the construction and facilities of our **Metu Hamlin Fistula Centre** by the end of 2009.

We are also working to co-operate with another organization to make treatment available in the far south of the country near **Arba Minch**.



Progress on construction in Metu

The **Mekelle Centre** has been very busy with more than 40 patients on the ward. This is due to the dedicated work of our outreach worker, Ato Solomon, whose rural outreach visits located many women in need. He has now left our employment and gone to work with the Clinton Foundation. We have a new staff member coming for interview very soon. A total of 574 operations were carried out in all our locations during this quarter.

Story of a Patient

Tringo Tequare is a patient at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. She first came to us two and a half years ago and is here now with us on her second visit because she has complicated health problems.

Tringo was injured with obstetric fistula during her first pregnancy after being in labour for five days. The traditional birth attendant helped her but her baby was stillborn. Because of the obstructed labour and as her baby was in the breech position, the traditional attendant didn't have the knowledge or resources to help her. During the difficult delivery of the child, Tringo was severely injured.

She said after her first treatment here, "Thanks to God, even if I can't control the leaking of urine, now I am able to control my stools and I am in good health."



Tringo

We asked her why she had come for a second time and she answered, "I am hoping to get cured since I am not dry as I cannot control my leaking urine like the other girls in this hospital". Her sister and brother-in-law are collecting income from a piece of land that the government gave to her because she is not able to manage the affairs on the field due to her condition. Her husband abandoned her and married another woman and both her parents have passed away.

After her first surgery Tringo went home, she waited for three months hoping that she would stop leaking and would be dry again. She paid a visit to a nearby health centre and she was told to come again to our hospital to be treated. She knew that to make a second journey to Addis would be difficult as she had to save enough money, and that was a big challenge for her. It has taken her two and a half years to make this second journey to us.

She comes from the northern part of Ethiopia around 600 km away. We hope and pray that after this round of treatment she can return to her community with dignity.

Prevention

We need to work hard on prevention so that young girls will not face the same problem as their mothers. One of the ways to prevent fistula is by educating the community about obstructed labour and teaching them what causes fistula.

Our public health officer in **Bahir Dar Hamlin Fistula Centre** has organized training throughout the Amhara region and has also prepared a radio programme. The ones who hear this programme learn about the opportunity to be healed.

We need to educate our society and create more awareness to prevent fistula so that young girls like Tringo will not have to face their worst nightmare.



A mother and Daughter admitted for Fistula Surgery

Midwifery College

The Midwifery college continues to develop rapidly and the last few months have been an exciting and challenging time. New accommodation buildings for the students are now complete and once fenced will be put to use. Work has also commenced on the first new purpose-built classrooms.



New accommodation buildings for midwifery students

Sister Beverly Stewart from UK has been helping out at the college for the last few months and has made a great contribution, thanks Bev! This term we have introduced new standards and teaching methods and Bev has worked hard with the team on this.

Problem Based Learning is a system where the students research patient case studies and present to their colleagues how these cases can be managed. It is very much a student based method and something new for both students and teaching staff, but a valuable tool in developing the confidence and competence of the midwives in training.

Ato Solomon Abebe, who is our assistant Dean for the college has commenced his Masters Degree which will greatly enhance the capacity of our staff team. Solomon has been working with us for more than 4 years now and has made a significant contribution to our work, even before the college had started.

We have been searching for other senior people to join our team, which has not been easy, since there are few highly qualified Ethiopian midwives who have good clinical experience. This is something that our college hopes to make a contribution to.



A student in training

During the last term the students who have continued their clinical training are now preparing for the longer midwifery clinical practice in rural areas. We are grateful for the help of **Professor Barbara Kwast** as she assists in this field of training.

Ethiopian Students visited the Hospital

Members of the Girl's Club of the Blue Bird Academy came to visit to see the activities of the hospital. These students are desperate to raise awareness of childbirth injuries to the whole community of the school through their mini-media, newsletters and panel discussions.

The visitors received briefings from the Public Relations Officer and have had thorough discussions by raising different questions about obstetric fistula. They showed a dedication and interest to pass on the information they gathered about the hospital and its activities to the school's community, relatives and friends.



Girls' Club of the Blue Academy visit us

Staff Profile

Nurse Physiotherapist **Azeb Befekadu** joined our hospital in August 1995. Over the years she has been helping in different aspects of nursing, including working in the operating theatre and in the wards.

After taking training in Physiotherapy in the UK and Australia, she became head of the **Physiotherapy Department**. She is now leading our small team in physiotherapy as well as the women's health clinic, dealing with post operative incontinence.

Sr. Azeb was married in 1999 and had a wonderful celebration with the staff in the hospital compound. They are now blessed with two beautiful children, a boy and a girl.

She said, "God has blessed me through my work and marriage, I have a loving husband and two adorable kids. I am lucky to have such a friendly staff to work with who make working an enjoyable experience. That is why I am always happy."



Sister Azeb with her husband and children

We are grateful to have her in our hospital with the other staff to help these poor women.

Latest news of Yetanite

This little patient mentioned in our last newsletter is slowly becoming stronger and slowly gaining weight with the high nutrition diet she has been receiving. In order to record her weight accurately she has to be held by one of the strong men at the hospital as she is not able to stand alone. Yetanite now greets members of staff with a smile. Her knee and hip contractions are improved and her legs are almost straight, but her ankles are stiff and rigid. She is insistent that she has her daily wheel-chair trips to the physiotherapy department, but It will be a long time yet before her troubles are over.

A model patient

Another patient arrived a few weeks ago with a man from her village. This man, who maybe a relative, needed to tell us her history as she is deaf and cannot speak. This is her story:

She became pregnant through being raped. She had a prolonged and difficult labour resulting in a stillbirth and a bladder fistula. Her mother cared for her as best as she could for five years, then this kind man found her and brought her to the hospital.

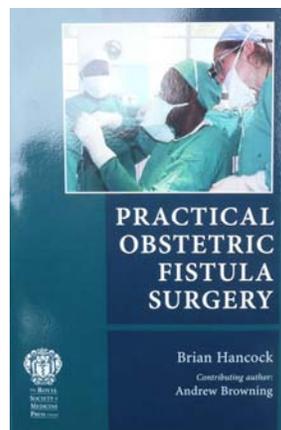
He said that he knew about the hospital because his wife was cured here and they have since had a lovely baby.

We asked him to be sure to come back in three weeks time as we had no way of getting her home to her distant village.

She has had her surgery, is dry and normal again and she has been a model patient. Through her actions she tells the staff that she wants to go home. This kind man returned as requested and will now wait until the patient has seen an ear specialist.

A New Medical Book

Dr Brian Hancock, one of our UK trustees, has recently completed his second medical book in the fistula field entitled, **“Practical Obstetric Fistula Surgery”**. A contributing author is **Dr Andrew Browning** from the Fistula Hospital. It is published by **The Royal Society of Medicine** and has a foreword by **Professor Gordon Williams**, the **Medical Director** at the hospital.



This book is intended for surgeons and nurses who are about to undertake or are already undertaking fistula surgery. Copies are available from us at £25 per copy.

Brian Hancock is a regular visitor to the Fistula Hospital where he undertakes fistula surgery, as he has done in Uganda and on the Mercy Ships. He is an honorary consultant surgeon to the University Hospital of South Manchester.

A “thank you” message from the Hospital

We would like to thank all our supporters around the world who in so many ways continue to help our patients.

We wish that we could express the joy and gratefulness of our patients as they receive their treatment and healing.

Thank you for your prayers and support for the work we are doing to help our poor patients.

We like to share stories of our patients with you to let you know how you help so many young women here in Ethiopia. *(Names are changed to protect their identity.)*

Thank you for all you have done in so many ways and we pray for your continuing support in the future.

From all who work at the Fistula Hospital