



Hamlin Fistula UK

Newsletter October 2013

Charity
Number:
1153053

Supporting the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia

A message from Dr Catherine Hamlin

To my dear friends of our patients, we have some very sad news. One of our previous patients who worked as a cook at the Hamlin College of Midwives was killed in a terrible accident. She was walking home with three of our midwifery students when all four girls were hit by a car. The cook was killed instantly and the three students were seriously injured and are now in hospital, recovering. When we visited we met and spoke with their doctors who gave us encouraging news.

Filling in the necessary post operative paperwork after a morning in theatre. Dr Fiseha is one of our experienced fistula surgeons. (Photo by Bruce Perry)



The Hamlin College of Midwives, although at present in a state of shock and sorrow over this accident, is doing great work with our tutors who are all so committed, hard working and enthusiastic in what they are achieving. We now have 70 students in training. Our Dean, Ato Zelalem, is a great leader and we are so fortunate to have him working with us. I was indeed touched when he immediately gave his blood for the student with a ruptured spleen, as he had the same rather rare blood group.

I am happy to report that we are now doing Caesarean section operations for our previous patients who are returning to us. Dr. Fekade our Medical Director did the first one, and delivered a lovely baby boy, much to the joy of his mother and all our staff! I found them round the cot the next morning! Now we have had several more so the novelty has worn off for us but for delighted mothers the novelty will never wear off. Some have had a series of stillbirths and so the joy of a live baby is huge.

Now cured fistula patients who become pregnant again can come back to our hospital in Addis Ababa (or any of our five regional centres) for a clean, safe surgical delivery, free of charge. This is a wonderful step towards providing obstetric services to the women and girls of Ethiopia. The number one cause of obstetric fistula is a lack of medical attention when it is most needed. Together with our trained midwives, we are expanding obstetric services to a population fast-approaching 100 million with less than 2000 midwives and 130 obstetrician/gynaecologists to look after them. We have a lot of work to do, but offering Caesareans to past patients is a fantastic step. I am so grateful to all our generous and loyal donors who are so dedicated to our work here in Ethiopia and have helped to make this happen. Thank you all. *(Dr Catherine Hamlin)*

Dr Hamlin is not only a skilled surgeon, she has an amazing love and passion for



the women's lives she is transforming and this is evident in the heart-felt emotion she displays when talking about the patients. Sadly the vast majority of the women who suffer fistulas are poor peasants who are never taken to a doctor and never receive medical assistance. These young girls who maybe just fifteen or sixteen years old feel their lives are ruined. Most are divorced from their husbands and are often sent to live in a hut by themselves on the edge of the village. To

make a donation to help these women, please visit www.hamlinfistulauk.org



Pictured here on the left is a patient who was brought to us three years ago weighing just 30 kg. She had spent six years living in a dark hut suffering a terrible double fistula injury. She had been fed only once a day and she stayed curled up in a ball causing her muscles to wither away. On the right, is a photo taken of her now. She can walk without a stick and her treatment continues. Most importantly, she is happy, contented and loved. She's become part of the family here.

Physiotherapy Department

Azeb is head of Physiotherapy and together with Lydia; they have been giving daily therapy sessions to the determined young lady pictured above. Their perseverance has enabled her to walk uprightly again. Azeb says the patient is almost ready to go to live at Desta Mender, our rehabilitation centre, where she will learn life changing skills so that she can eventually go home and support herself. Her home is close to a health facility from where she will be able to obtain her continuing medical supplies.

All patients receive physiotherapy treatment before and after operations and some are taught exercises for stress incontinence, so the department is always busy. The department is operational from 8.30 am to 5 pm each day.

Azeb has worked at the hospital for eight years and she says her job brings great rewards. She has a husband and three children aged 9 years, 7 years and 3 years.

Lydia was nursing in the ward before transferring to the physiotherapy department where she is very happy. She has been married for 1 year.

A Special Kind of Graduation

These lovely ladies have graduated from the Adult Education programme for past



fistula patients at Desta Mender. They have learned general business skills, team spirit, communication, their rights and responsibilities, saving habits, health education, self sufficiency and much more.

This is all designed to help past patients to reintegrate back to village life and meaningful employment.

Nigussie is the kind face that greets our patients when they first arrive at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. He has been with us for ten years and is ‘compassion on legs’.



Getahun and Tamene are two more important people who see patients once they have passed through the hands of Nigussie.

They have worked here for fifteen and

three years respectively. They take case history notes from new patients; these are then passed on to the Out Patients Department. They often see twenty or more patients each week. They work six days a week, Sunday being their day off and the Sister in charge then deals with any admissions that arrive on their off duty days.

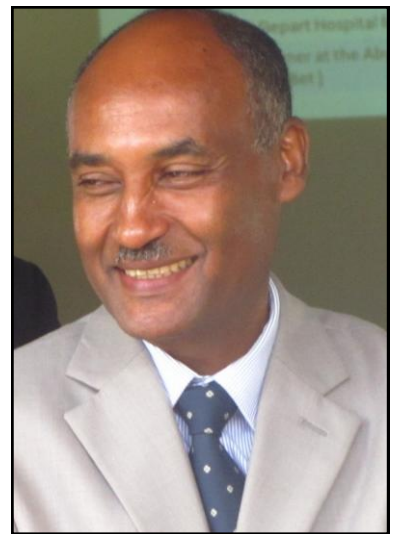
Earlier there were two admissions from other countries. A Sudanese woman from Khartoum had a difficult operation after her 6th baby which caused her injury. Thankfully, she has now had surgery, is cured and already back with her family in the Sudan. The other was a young and beautiful girl from Yemen aged 18 who came with her brother and was sent home cured to hopefully have a live baby soon!

Ato Zelalem Dean of Hamlin Midwifery College

The Government requires the Dean of a midwifery college to have a Masters Degree and we are very pleased to have Ato Zelalem in our employment. He is highly skilled to train midwives and has previously worked in Government and private education colleges. While living in Awasa he was involved in educating midwives at junior level.

Zelalem has found the Hamlin Fistula organisation a happy place to work and his mission is to continue to educate highly skilled midwives to enable them to make a change here in Ethiopia.

The name Zelalem means 'everlasting' and the work he is doing with training, deployment and support of midwives in rural Ethiopia will have 'everlasting' impact on Ethiopian families.



Hamlin College of Midwives has an Education and Deployment section which is committed to training and deploying midwives to the rural community with its vision; "For all women to receive care in childbirth from kind, competent and responsible midwives." The College is running all the academic activities and currently the necessary preparation is being carried out for assigning our

midwifery students for the clinical practice to different Health Institutions including Attat Hospital. The course lasts for 6-9 weeks. In addition to this, there are other important duties being conducted by the academic staff, such as; Curriculum Revision, Internal Quality Audit Documentation and preparation for the Annual Research Day, where the presenters and participants are invited from other institutions.

Our Hamlin Midwives deployed in Health Centres are a highly recognised group of people who are actively involved on various management committees to get their voices heard. They are considered as role models for other midwives and are highly involved in community activities. Their contribution helps to keep the name of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia known throughout their areas of work. These girls are confident, knowledgeable and skilled in so many midwifery challenges. The health centres where they work are all in remote areas where they are establishing antenatal clinics. They are visited regularly by our tutors and are in touch by mobile phone with our regional fistula hospitals. Any patients needing to be referred from the health centres to our regional hospitals are transported by ambulance.

Our Regional Centres

Due to a lack of transport infrastructure and harsh geography, many patients cannot access the capital for treatment at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. For some the cost of a bus fare to Addis is just not possible for their family. For this reason, we have built five regional Hamlin Fistula Centres. These capital works have been funded by international donors and have enabled us to treat many more patients in the provinces where health services are very limited. We have Hamlin



Fistula Centres in Mekele in the north, Bahir Dar in the northeast, Yirgalem in the south, Harar in the east, Metu in the southwest. Each Hamlin Fistula Centre is close to a government-funded general hospital.

Pictured is the 40-bed ward at Yirgalem. This centre is supported by **Hamlin Fistula UK** - we have promised to pay all running costs for the foreseeable future. At times it is so busy here that often there are two patients in each bed. An additional 20 bed ward is urgently required, but we need funding.

Head of Pharmacy

Melaku has been employed at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital for five years and is very happy in his work. He is supported by two young lady pharmacists. Melaku is responsible for dispensing the daily requirements for patients and for ordering all drugs for the hospital. Many drugs can be obtained in three days from government stores in Addis, those not available in Ethiopia are ordered from UK and **Hamlin Fistula UK** is invoiced for payment.



All Hamlin Outreach Centres control their own drugs supplies and any not obtainable locally are ordered through Melaku in Addis.

Hamlin Midwives Success Story

Sr. Saron and Sr. Mahlet are two of our deployed midwives working in Metu region. Here is a story from them:

An 18 year old patient delivered a live baby at home but the Traditional Birth Attendant had failed to remove the placenta. Soon the mother became very ill and her family took her to Sibbo Health Centre where we met her. We soon identified that the mother was in a state of shock, had a high (un-recordable) blood pressure with a rapid pulse.

After administering initial emergency treatment we realised the placenta was partially adherent, so it could not be removed manually. We realised we could not



Sr. Saron,
Ato Zerihun,(Midwife Mentor)
and Sibbo Health Centre staff member

manage the problem at health centre level, so we called the Hamlin Ambulance at Metu and had the patient transferred to hospital. The gynaecologist removed the placenta under anaesthetic and the patient was well enough to return home after staying one week in hospital.

The life of this mother was saved by the rapid intervention of our Hamlin Midwives.

We must say 'thank you' to all of our Midwifery Students who are working hard in the classroom as well as in their clinical practice areas, many giving outstanding end of year results. We must give thanks also to the dedication of their tutors.

Death of Dr John Kelly.

It is with great sadness that we report the death on 2nd August 2013 of Obstetrician/Gynaecologist Dr Kelly, one of our longest serving Trustees here in UK.

As well as being a very valued member of our team here, he has been performing fistula surgery since 1967. When Drs. Reg and Catherine Hamlin heard about the work of Dr Kelly they asked if he would visit Ethiopia to be their locum and he has helped at the Addis Ababa



Fistula Hospital from time to time since those early days.

For 30 years he worked full-time as an obstetrician/gynaecologist in Birmingham and during that time he gave several weeks of his vacation every year to the Third World. Since his retirement he spent most of his time travelling to Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Dr Kelly also worked for many years at Attat, where our Hamlin Midwifery Students now go for some of their practical training.

He will be greatly missed by so many people around the world and especially by all of us here at Hamlin Fistula UK.

All at **Hamlin Fistula UK** send you Happy Christmas greetings. If you wish to donate to us as part of your Christmas giving this year you will enable one more woman to receive life changing surgery and treatment for her childbirth injury. So many women are still waiting to be healed. Restoring one lady's dignity is a priceless gift.

Drs. Reginald and Catherine Hamlin came to Ethiopia to work 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. Dr Reg. Hamlin died in 1993 but Dr Catherine Hamlin never doubted that the work had to continue. 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, barefoot. Distanced by their relatives, we are their only hope; therefore **all care, treatment and surgery is completely free of charge.**

The Hamlins first came to Birmingham in 1967 on a fundraising tour. Dr Reginald Hamlin lectured at the University of Birmingham, which has a Medical School with an outstanding record as a teaching hospital. The Charity was formed immediately after this visit to support them in their wonderful healing work.

There are many ways you can support us.

A direct gift of cash

A regular gift by 'standing order'

A gift by CAF cheque

Payroll giving

A CAF Card or Credit Card through our secure website– just click on 'Ways of Giving'. There are special arrangements to give relief from Inheritance Tax on bequests, and from Capital Gains Tax on gifts of shares.

If you wish your contribution to be a Gift Aid donation, please complete and sign the form below and return it to the CEO

Mr Laurence Parkes,
Hamlin Fistula UK, 4 Nimmings Road,
Halesowen, West Midlands, B62 9JJ

Please accept the enclosed donation for the work of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital through the Charity **Hamlin Fistula UK**.

Cheque attached £.....

Title..... Forename(s).....

Surname.....

Address.....
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If you wish to Gift Aid this donation, please tick and sign below

Signature..... Date

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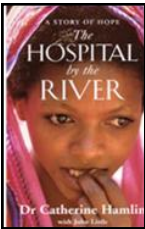
I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

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Collections: 0121 559 3999

Orders by post will be despatched on receipt of payment



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£5 each (if collected from office) or **by post £8 each**

Qty:Book(s) @ £8.00 (within UK) £



Dr Hamlin's second Book "Catherine's Gift"
£5 each (if collected from office) or **by post £8 each**

Qty:Book(s) @ £8.00 (within UK) £



Logo Lapel Pin
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Qty:packs of 4 pins @ £7 (within UK) £.....



Hamlin Fistula Key Ring 2 cm diam.
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Notelets **£2.50 per pack of 6 (if collected from office)**
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“Two for One”

This 16 page soft cover A5 book tells the story of the life of a fistula patient. **£1 each** or **by post -3 copies for 3.50**

Qty: X 3copies @ £3.50

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Remember to say you are supporting **“Hamlin Fistula UK”** - every purchase makes a contribution to the Charity with no additional cost to yourselves. Do investigate it.

