



Hamlin Fistula UK

The Only UK Charity Exclusively Supporting the Addis
Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia

Charity
Number:
1153053

Newsletter July 2015

(All patients' names are changed to protect their identity.)

Dr Hamlin:

“My dream is to eradicate obstetric fistula from Ethiopia. I won't achieve this in my lifetime, but you might in yours.”

This year has been a challenge already with so many patients needing treatment. We have 90 midwives in training at the Hamlin College of Midwives and we are so grateful for the work of the midwives who have already graduated and are deployed to rural areas in Ethiopia.

Earlier this year we celebrated the International Women's Day with civil servants from different organizations who chose to spend the day with our patients. There were lots of activities including music that help them to have fun and those not in bed danced spontaneously to the music – our staff joined in as well!

We are also very excited, since our hospital becomes a Centre of Excellence to train fistula surgeons. Dr Fekade Ayenachew, our Medical Director, paid a monitoring visit to Nepal to see the surgeons who trained here. His visit was organized by FIGO. *(More about this visit on page 6)*

I am often asked how my health is. I am quite alright, getting along nicely in my house with my faithful staff of many years looking after me! The last time I operated was a few months before I



Dr Hamlin with Mamitu at Yirgalem Outreach Hospital

turned 91. My hands are still perfectly steady but I stopped operating because if something goes wrong and I needed to open an abdomen, I would need my walking sticks to stand. So I thought it best to stop operating. I still enjoy doing ward rounds and seeing if I can assist in the Outpatients Department. The patients are what keep me going and my staff are like family to me.

Thank you once again for the support we receive from you. Your generosity is felt here and we are so very grateful for it. With my love to you all, Catherine.

Patients Stories

Alewiya came to us from Oromiya Region. She had three babies from her first marriage, but lost two of them, the remaining daughter is 3 years old. She married again and at the end of her



next pregnancy she endured a prolonged and obstructed labour lasting 2 days. Her husband took her to Jimma Hospital for help. By this time the baby had died and the medical staff at Jimma Hospital gave her surgery to remove the dead baby and then let her go home. She soon realised that all was not well; she had developed an obstetric fistula and stayed at home, in isolation, for seven months. The family did not know what to do, so they prayed. Alewiya said “I prayed to God to have mercy. I cursed myself. I haven’t seen the outside of my village for seven months”. She heard about our hospital from a relative living in Addis

Ababa and all the neighbours and relatives collected sufficient money to transport Alewiya to our Fistula Hospital. In just three short weeks she was cured and ready to go back home. Before leaving she said, “For me to be cured from this terrible condition is like being reborn, no words can say how grateful I am. I want to thank Emmaye (*Mother—Dr Hamlin*) and all of you here at this hospital. May God bless you all. ”

Patient Bekelu, aged 26 years, is also from Oromiya Region and she is with us for the second time. This is her story. She was married at 15 and was pregnant with her first baby at 20. Her husband stayed with her all through her 8 painful days of labour. Due to the prolonged labour she suffered muscle contracture and was unable to walk. On the eighth day her family carried her to the nearest health centre, which is



a three hour walk from their village. Bekelu’s injuries were so severe that the health centre transferred her by ambulance to Paulos Hospital in Addis Ababa where doctors saved Bekelu’s life but sadly delivered a stillborn baby. She stayed at Paulos hospital for 15 days before being

transferred here to our Hamlin hospital to assess her fistula injury and to begin intensive physiotherapy treatment for her muscle contractures. Bekelu is back with us and this time, after her surgery, she is completely cured. She says, “Those days with the injury were the hardest time in my life as I was unable to participate in any communal activity. I couldn’t go to the market place; I just lived in isolation looking after cattle alone. Now thanks to Emmaye and all of you here, I have regained my life. I want to be a fistula ambassador in my village. I will tell the girls to deliver in a hospital and if I see any woman incontinent, I will tell her to come here and get treatment”.



Some of our patients are arriving with prolapse problems rather than fistula injuries. Presenting symptoms are the same as fistula injuries inasmuch that the patient arrives being incontinent of urine. In order that we may help these patients a medical team from Oregon University, USA, has been to our Mekelle Hamlin Fistula centre to teach surgery techniques for Pelvic Organ Prolapse. The Regional Health Bureau reported how proud they are of our centre and said the Mekelle

Hamlin Fistula Centre is the model hospital in the Region. We applaud Dr. Rahel and her team.

Thumbs up to Birke.

Twenty year old Birke is a first year student at Hamlin College of Midwives. She is from Amhara Region. Before joining our college she had proved to be a top ranking student throughout her academic career. She scored the highest grade (point 4) on her high school completion and joined preparatory school where she continued to be a high scorer, and subsequently joined university. She was assigned to study engineering at Government University but she was not interested in it. All she has been dreaming of is to be a health professional and help those mothers in the countryside suffering from birth complications. Her own mother suffered in this



way and her baby brother was stillborn. For a brilliant student like Birke, passing the strict screening process of our Midwifery College was not difficult. She joined the college in the 2014 academic year and said, “I feel like I am lucky to be here; the beautiful teaching compound, the well qualified teachers, the professional and world-class way of teaching, the availability of ample teaching aids and most of all Dr. Hamlin’s encouragement; all these make the college unique and lovable”. Birke is completing her first semester and her results so far have kept her in the top high scoring group. She has attained straight A results in all of the six subjects. We say “Thumbs up to Birke and may you keep up your astonishing work to realize Dr Hamlin’s dream, to eradicate obstetric fistula”.

Dr Fekade Delivers Crucial Training.



Medical Director Dr Fekade is currently training two of our regional surgeons, Dr Bitew and Dr Melaku from the Hamlin Bahir Dar and Mekelle centres, on ileal conduit urinary diversion surgery. In the past, visiting urologists have performed this procedure for patients whose bladder is completely destroyed. Once training is complete, these two busy centres will be able to provide this important procedure.

Many fistula patients are from isolated villages and have never had their photograph taken before their stay at our hospital. For many it is quite a thrill to have a photo taken and see it on the back of a camera. Some ask if they can have a copy to take home. This may be the only photo of themselves they will ever possess. This photo has really captured the delight on the face of this patient. She went home a few weeks later with a photo in her pocket, cured of her injuries and full of hope.





Our patients are happy when they come into our hospitals. There is plenty of love and much laughter and there's nothing like a diagnosis of 'cured' to put a smile on the face of a woman who has been through more than anyone can really imagine. This former patient lives in the north of Ethiopia and is now a qualified Safe Motherhood Ambassador with 'Healing Hands of Joy'.

These three wonderful women are cured obstetric fistula patients from our hospital in Mekelle. They have gone on to train with our friends at 'Healing Hands of Joy' as safe motherhood ambassadors. With happy toddlers in tow, they head out into remote areas of the north to educate communities.



Childbirth injuries are not only suffered by the young. Some women live with obstetric fistula and are in agonising pain for years before they learn of our famous fistula hospitals.

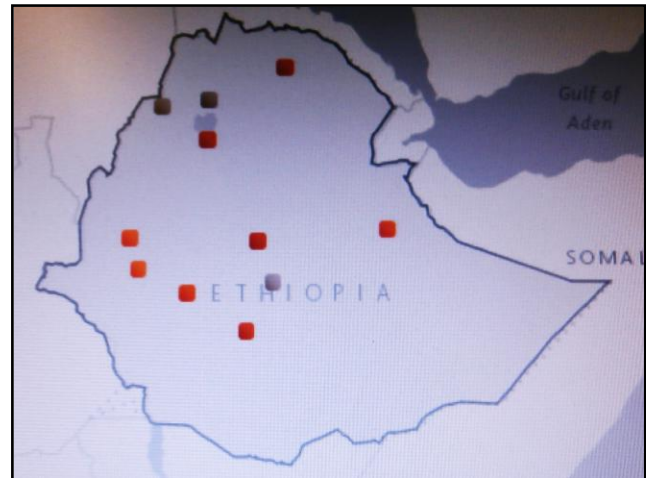


We want you to meet Sister Helina, the head of Urodynamics at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. She's a specialist nurse who works out why patients are not dry after their first obstetric fistula operation so that their second operation will be a success.

Research

Co-ordinator and women's health researcher, Dr Karen Ballard from the UK and who was featured in our April 2014 newsletter, has been leading a major research study about women's experiences of maternal care in Ethiopia.

This map shows data submitted by health facilities that provide obstetric fistula repair in Ethiopia.



With years of experience and a vast database of documented fistula cases, Hamlin Fistula now offers tremendous opportunities for research that will improve maternal care on a global level. Dr. Karen Ballard oversees the research activities at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. Her work will increase our understanding of fistula treatment and prevention, and ultimately improve patient care. Research topics include factors that predispose women to fistula, the connection between mobility and health, neurological injuries associated with fistula, and many more. Karen and her team in Ethiopia have trained over 200 health workers to go out to villages in rural areas to ask women about their experiences of giving birth. The locations were chosen to be a representative mix of women who receive care from health centres where Hamlin midwives operate as well as those who receive care from health centres that are not supported by Hamlin. This has meant that the researchers have surveyed women living near to health facilities as well as those who live in very remote, rural areas. In order to identify 4,500 women who had delivered a baby in the preceding year, the health workers talked to more than 28,000 women living in districts in the north and east of the country. The 45-question survey asked each woman how many times she had been pregnant, about the outcome of each pregnancy, the woman's experience of health care and what happened as she went through her most recent labour. The large amount of data collected was entered onto spreadsheets by a team of volunteers; sophisticated software was then used to analyse the information. Already it is clear that the Hamlin midwives are doing a good job and provide a high level of care throughout the pregnancy and childbirth. Over a third of women chose to use the health centre for delivery, up from 10% in previous years. However, there is still further work to do,

especially in the very remote areas, where women are less willing to deliver their baby in a health centre. Around a quarter of women are still delaying seeking help from the health centres and with the difficult transportation, this can mean that they arrive when they are very sick, putting the life of the mother and the baby at risk. The improvements in maternal care have led to a reduction in the stillbirth rate and maternal mortality, although further increases in the uptake of health facilities are still necessary. Further results from this study will follow.....



Earlier this year our Medical Director, **Dr Fekade** made his first trip to Asia to provide mentoring support to fellow fistula surgeons in Nepal. Dr Fekade is an expert fistula surgeon and is a Trainer of Trainers in fistula surgery. He visited the **Kathmandu Model**

Hospital where he gave a presentation in which he highlighted the importance of a holistic approach to obstetric fistula care, this has proved to be so important for patients at all of our Hamlin hospitals. He also discussed efforts Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia is currently engaged in nationally to combat fistula in Ethiopia. During his stay, Dr Fekade operated on selected complex fistula cases.



He visited this new outreach general hospital where a ward has already been put in place to treat fistula cases.

On behalf of all the women and girls who have been treated at a Hamlin hospital or have been helped by a Hamlin midwife to ensure a safe delivery, we thank you.

Your love and support makes it possible for the Hamlin staff to serve the women of Ethiopia. Every donation helps one more patient return home with her dignity restored. We appreciate all you do for us in so many ways.



This poster was strung on a tree at Desta Mender - it says what every patient feels.

All at **Hamlin Fistula UK** thank you for your continuing generous support.

Without your gifts we would not be able to help so many women.

Your help gives them the dignity they deserve and the hope and opportunity to a better life.

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 Company Secretary

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.....

.....

.....

.....

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

Signature..... Date

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.

A company Limited by Guarantee Registered in England.

No: 08457433

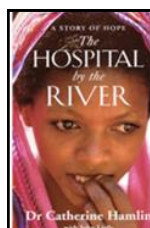
Merchandise for Sale

(Please see pages below)

Please phone office to arrange time for personal

Collections: 0121 559 3999

Orders by post will be despatched on receipt of payment



Dr Hamlin's first Book "The Hospital by the River"
£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

£1 each (if collected from office) or by post **in multiples of 4 pins at £5**

Qty:packs of 4 pins @ £5 (within UK) £.....



Hamlin Fistula Key Ring 2 cm diameter.

£1 each (if collected from office) or by post **in multiples of 4 rings at £5**

Qty:packs of 4 rings @ £5 (within UK) £.....



Notelets **£2.50 per pack of 6 (if collected from office)**
 or by post **in multiples of 4 packs of 6 at £12**

Qty: packs of 6 notelets @ £12 (within UK) £.....



“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 -4 copies for £5**

Qty: X 4copies @ £5



Bookmarks

£1 each or by post – up to 15 bookmarks please add £1

Qty:@ £1 each plus £1 p&p - for up to 15 bookmarks
 £.....

Do you internet shop at Amazon, eBay, John Lewis, Next and many more favourite retailers?

May we suggest that you Register at: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> and then put it in your Favourites. (Bookmark).

Instead of going directly to Amazon, etc. find the retailer through [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

Click on it and shop.

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.