



Hamlin Fistula UK

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

Charity
Number:
1153053

Newsletter April 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.”

International Day to End Obstetric Fistula -May 23rd 2015

On behalf of millions of women and girls suffering the devastating consequences of obstetric fistula around the globe, we remember them on 23rd May.

As this anniversary date approaches we hope to create significant awareness and hopefully much needed extra support for the prevention, management and eventual elimination of obstetric fistula.

A fistula injury is a degrading condition, in which a woman who suffers obstructed labour lasting many days delivers in most cases a stillborn baby, is left incontinent and is often ostracised by her community, living alone, hiding from others so the world is not aware of her.



Since 1959 Dr Catherine Hamlin and her dedicated staff have worked tirelessly to restore the lives of women with fistula in Ethiopia. Thousands of surgeries have been performed, doctors, midwives and nurses have been trained and much fundraising has been in evidence to build hospitals to help with this important work.

As we remember **International End Fistula Day**. Dr. Hamlin shares some of her experiences with us.

I remember when my husband and I saw our first fistula patient at the hospital where we worked in Addis Ababa. We were touched and appalled by her sadness. She was a beautiful young woman in urine-soaked ragged clothes and sitting alone in our out-patients department away from other waiting patients. We knew she was more in need of our help than any of the other patients. She had been through a long labour of five days with only the village women to help. And so we saw the first of what has been thousands of fistula sufferers. Five percent of all women who give birth have an obstructed labour and cannot deliver their child without help, but until recent years a Caesarean section or some other skilled delivery has not been available for women in rural Ethiopia. The fistula patients are the survivors of this ordeal and, sadly, there are many who do not survive.

Over the years, much has improved. The Ministry of Health has given health services to the rural population by building health centres throughout the countryside. Looking forward, our greatest need is to have a well-trained midwife in every village in Ethiopia. Our midwifery training college took in its first students in 2007. We take 12th grade students from countryside schools to train on a four-year degree course. These girls go back to their homes to work in ante-natal clinics attached to the many health centres. As more of our students graduate we are hoping to spread our midwives throughout the country, then women won't have to suffer this devastating ordeal.

Poor country girls have little or no access to water to keep clean. They have no toilet in their home or village so they live with bodily wastes continually running down their legs. One such woman came to the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital wearing the only dress she possessed and in a terrible state, but with good nutrition and plenty of rest she was soon able to receive the physiotherapy she needed before having her surgery. A few months later she had her operation to correct her childbirth injuries. She was cured and went home clean and dry, wearing a new dress and with a new shawl around her shoulders.

We love and cherish each mother and will work tirelessly on their behalf. Join us in reverence for all of our global mothers: may they all have access to great maternal health care that each and every one of them so very much deserves. Dr Catherine Hamlin.

We can't do it all alone, but with your help we can make it happen.

We ask you personally or as a group, and businesses alike, to please consider raising or donating the cost (or part) of a standard fistula operation to completely restore one woman's life. It's a big ask but we can't do it without you! It costs

from £300 to fund one surgical procedure and hospital stay for each patient. This will change a life for ever so that she can return home with her dignity restored. These young women were horribly injured for simply trying to bring a child into the world.

Many patients are in so much pain and are so traumatised by their injuries that they say they wish they had died along with their baby. Please help these people. You can help us to end fistula by donating to Hamlin Fistula UK.

(Address on page 8)

Today you can help change tomorrow for women suffering this humiliating condition.

Thank you for your support!

An African proverb says, “Do not let the sun go up and down more than once for a labouring woman”.

Our patients all hope for a dry bed and for a few days after surgery they wait and wonder to be dry, to be continent and to have their lives back and their dignity restored.



Surgery over,
now she waits and wonders



Wokinesh was eighteen when she came to the hospital with terrible injuries from an obstructed labour. It was less than a month after her baby’s delivery and she had a massive infection, two fistulas and severe contractures of her limbs. She was so malnourished that her hair was rust-coloured and because of her weakness, she could not lift herself up from the bed. Her family had just given up on her. Dr Hamlin and her team set about making her well.

They fed her good, nourishing food and gave her physiotherapy. When she was

strong enough they repaired her shocking internal injuries and after eighteen months at the hospital she was dry and ready to go home. “*She’d just been a little skeleton lying in the bed,*” Dr Hamlin recalls. Wokinesh’s determined will-to-live returned as her health was restored. Her entire hospital stay was funded by generous donors. On behalf of Wokinesh, THANK YOU!

We are sometimes asked the question, “Why do you ask for money in your newsletters?” The reason is clear – the organisation is run entirely on donations and every donation we receive goes to help these women whose stories you read about. We are able to give back to many the dignity they so deserve.



A poster strung on a tree at Desta Mender says what every patient feels.

What a joy it is to see the face of a mother as she cradles her new-born baby. It is your love and support that makes it possible for the Hamlin team to continue to restore the dignity to so many of the women in their care and to enable them to go on to have a live baby to hold.



Dr Fekade, our Medical Director, oversees births by Caesarean section at our main hospital in Addis.

Each year we move a step nearer to Dr Hamlin being able to fulfil her dream to eradicate obstetric fistula from Ethiopia. In 2014 more than 2000 patients were treated at our main hospital and five outreach centres.

We now have nearly 100 Hamlin midwives working in rural parts the country helping women to safely deliver their babies. But the challenge still continues. There will be thousands of new and untreated cases during the coming year. This is mostly due to the lack of competent maternal healthcare available to women who find themselves in prolonged and obstructed labour, particularly to those who live in rural parts of Ethiopia.



A student midwife from Tigray Region helping a woman in labour.

Photo-Joni Kabana

Hamlin midwives have assisted more than 10,000 safe deliveries working out of 27 rural government health care clinics. Over the next three years, we will extend the reach of our midwives to many more rural health care clinics. This deployment of the highest standard of midwifery care will continue to have a great impact on reducing the number of new cases of obstetric fistula across Ethiopia.

Dr Catherine Hamlin and Hamlin Fistula Partner Organisations around the world have been dedicated to helping to eradicate Obstetric Fistula longer than any other organisation and the hospital has trained surgeons from many countries. We believe that all mothers should have the right to proper medical care.



Pictured here is a basket full of the best bread rolls in the world. They are baked on site by our wonderful team of cooks at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. Good nourishing food is an important part of healing for patients.

We Applaud Dr Melaku and his Team

Our Hamlin Fistula Centre in Mekelle has received an Award of Best Practice in Tigray Region at an event hosted by the Tigray Regional Health Bureau.

Our centre is one of the two organizations awarded for the contribution to health in a region that has a population of more than 4 million. Dr. Melaku received the award from the President of the Region Mr. Abay Weldu and State Minister of Health, Dr. Amir.

Sarah Hamlin, the granddaughter of Dr Hamlin is entering a team of fundraisers to take part in the Great Ethiopian Run in Addis Ababa at the end of this year.

Sarah is looking for twelve participants from across the UK who are able to commit their time and energy to each raise £2,500 for Hamlin Fistula UK during 2015. They will take part in an organised trip to Ethiopia in November 2015 during which they will witness the work of the hospital first-hand and take part in the 10km Great Ethiopian Run, Africa's biggest road race. Several have already signed up for this event but there are still spaces and time to register. If you would like to join this trip of a lifetime, please e-mail Sarah directly on iamsarahhamlin@gmail.com or go to our website hamlinfistulauk.org where you can find out more and download an application form.

Two of the people already signed up for the Run of a Lifetime write here:-

Pippa White: *The first advert for the run caught my fancy... yet my spouse decided it wasn't for me, which is why I'm all excited to be flying out some time in November to Ethiopia! Spouse went on an operational tour and sent me back an email about an Improvised Explosive Device. In response, I sent the application form off – he can worry about me for once. This is my turn to grab a once in a lifetime memory.*



I live in the first world – I've been incredibly lucky with my birth care (my eldest should

have died) and with my healthcare in general. I'm lucky to have opportunities that so many women would like.... to work or not work, to have children or not have children, to drive or walk to collect my shopping. The choices that I can make have a huge impact on my quality of life, but so many are denied that choice. So, for women across the world, I'm grabbing hold of the opportunity to run high with a huge smile on my face. I've supported Hamlin Fistula UK with a monthly direct debit for a number of years now – this is extra. Progress so far? Well, I can now run 10km if it's flat and at a mere 100m above sea level. My plan is to improve my fitness - being fit as a choice is a first world problem. I will improve my lung capacity – by laughing and talking and sharing and... well, perhaps you would like to have a virtual coffee with me and text a donation to **70700** – the body of the text needs to say: **JPSH99 £2.50 (or however much a coffee costs at your place!)** Alternatively you might feel that you could come too –and join us as we laugh and fundraise like mad! November, bring it on!

Annie Hall writes: *I'm off to Ethiopia!*



It's been many years now since I started, like many others, a regular donation to the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa. I have gone on and on and on and on about the marvellous work that is performed there on a regular basis. So much so that my children kept telling me to go and see it for myself. However I explained that I wouldn't be much use and fund raising back here was more beneficial. Imagine my excitement therefore when I read in the autumn Newsletter that there is to be a group of 12 people going there in November 2015 to take part in the Great Ethiopian Run! OK so I don't run, but hey, I looked it up, and thought 10 k - I could walk that with a bit of training. The altitude might make it harder but..... the only drawback would be raising the money, £2,500, but I had a year to do that in and knew that it would be possible. So I have shown people how to make chocolates, have asked friends to support me on my Just Giving page and



am now seeing that it might actually happen. I might actually go there! I will certainly keep you all posted. [justgiving.com/Annie-Hall- Ethiopia](https://www.justgiving.com/Annie-Hall-Ethiopia) if you want to help a 66 year old achieve her target!

Sarah is very proud of her grandparents' legacy and feels privileged to be able to contribute to its on-going work. Sarah says:



Sarah with her husband

"For my siblings and I, childhood visits to our grandparents in Ethiopia were the most exciting holidays we could imagine. I'm thrilled to be able to offer an opportunity for both long-term and new supporters of HFUK to discover this wonderful country. It's my hope that this event will increase UK awareness and support for Hamlin Fistula and for the thousands of Ethiopian women they treat every year. These

women suffer terribly from an easily preventable condition – one that we very seldom hear of here in the UK because it is so rare. They need people to share their stories and to help end fistula for good."

Sarah recently spent time telling people about her grandparents' work at the aptly named Marathon Restaurant in London.

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.....

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

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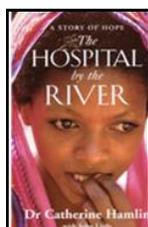
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(Please see pages below)

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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**

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Hamlin Fistula Key Ring 2 cm diameter.
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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

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Bookmarks

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

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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.