



Hamlin
Fistula UK

2021 Annual Review

A heartfelt thank you

Thank you from the Board of Hamlin Fistula UK for all your support in 2021. Despite the challenges Ethiopia faced over the past year including Covid-19 and internal conflict in the north of the country, the extraordinary efforts of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's team ensured that treatment, rehabilitation and prevention services continued to be delivered for women through one of the most difficult years in HFE's history.

Further to this, thanks to the tremendous commitment of you, our supporters in the UK, and all Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's supporters around the world, we exceeded our targets for patients treated for devastating childbirth injuries including fistula by 12% - providing 1,567 life changing surgeries.

At Yirgalem Regional Fistula Hospital, Hamlin's hospital in southern Ethiopia that we fully fund, 277 surgeries for women with childbirth injuries were carried out - also exceeding the target for the year by an impressive 24%.

Closer to home here in the UK, we made several advances in our work. We welcomed Baroness Tessa Blackstone as our first ever patron and hope that her support and advocacy will enable us to do even more for women in Ethiopia. In our Birmingham office we improved many of our systems to enable us to better serve you, our supporters. Our digital presence grew significantly and we look forward to developing this aspect of our work further in 2022.

Our programme of talks to community groups up and down the country was again curtailed by the pandemic, sadly. We managed a small number - mostly via Zoom - but hope that 2022 will see a return to more frequent face-to-face meetings with our supporters. And, as always, our wonderful volunteer knitters provided beautiful blankets and baby clothes that we despatched to Ethiopia where they will be given to every woman who comes to Hamlin for treatment.

Despite the many challenges faced during the year, your support never wavered and we are grateful for your continuing commitment. We are confident that this year will see even greater growth for Hamlin as we continue the important work of tackling fistula and childbirth injuries across Ethiopia.

Thank you.

Greg Morris

Chair of Trustees, Hamlin Fistula UK



Treatments

1,567
total surgeries
in 2021

652
prolapse
surgeries

Rehabilitation

724
women received short
term rehabilitative
education & training

363
patients received
psychological
counselling

Prevention

81
students
undertaking their
BSc Degree in
Midwifery

25
midwifery
graduates deployed
to rural health
centres

*Programme year 1 July 2020 - 30 June 2021

Treatment



Tarekech was given a new lease of life after diversion surgery, carried out by Dr Wondwossen.

Obstetric fistula can mostly be repaired with a single life-changing fistula surgery. This year, despite the challenges of Covid-19, our surgical teams at six regional fistula hospitals delivered 1,567 surgeries for women with childbirth injuries including obstetric fistula, prolapsed uterus and other obstetric and gynaecological conditions. This figure is testament to the hard work and dedication of our clinicians and staff in Ethiopia.

A detailed Covid-19 patient flow and management protocol has been established and is being delivered across all Hamlin hospitals, in line with WHO guidelines, to provide Covid-safe patient care.

The highest number of surgeries, 397, was undertaken at our headquarters hospital in Addis Ababa. As well as providing surgery for women from Addis Ababa and the surrounding areas, the hospital also delivers more complex surgeries for patients who have been transferred from our regional fistula hospitals.

Hamlin's surgical work took a big step forward this year with the recruitment of a specialist diversion surgeon, Dr Wondwossen, pictured. For some women, fistula can result in extensive damage to their bladder or lower urinary tract which sadly is not always possible to cure. For these women, the offer of diversion surgery – to provide them with a urostomy (stoma) bag – can enable them to begin the journey to getting their lives back. We provided counselling and diversion surgery to women in need, as well as long term stoma care.



Rehabilitation

Fistula can have a devastating impact on a woman's life. Not only have patients suffered the devastation of having had a stillbirth and a traumatic injury, in many cases women are then divorced by their husbands, abandoned by their families and even cast out by their communities.

The team at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's rehabilitation centre, Desta Mender, continues to restore the

health and dignity of women who have sustained severe or complex fistula injuries.

Patients receive both physical and emotional rehabilitation during their stay, while accessing ongoing medical care for their injuries. In addition, Desta Mender gives women the opportunity to take part in literacy and numeracy classes, life skills and vocational training, empowering them to be productive members of their communities when they return home.

While Covid-19 forced Desta Mender to suspend programmes from June to August 2020, the centre reopened in September 2020 and continues to provide services with protective measures taken to ensure the safety of both staff and patients.

"The team at Hamlin has not only brought me out of darkness, but has provided me with skills and support to make life easier. How can I express my gratitude?"

Medina

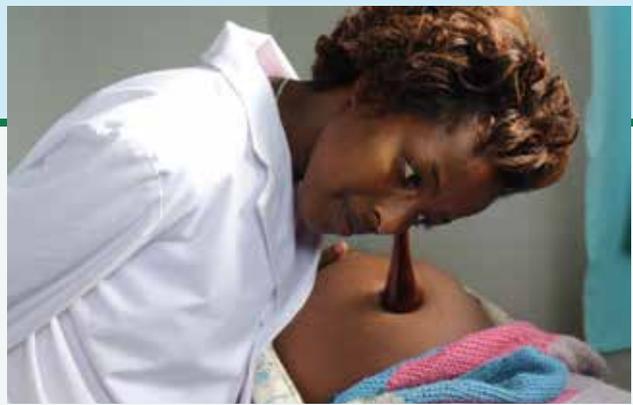
Prevention

A midwife for every woman. It's a simple concept and one that we believe will make the biggest difference in finally ending fistula, forever. Under a midwife's care, problems can be identified early and their work can be the difference between life and death.

Hamlin midwives play an essential role in preventing obstetric fistulas and saving the lives of hundreds of mothers and babies every year. Based in more than 50 Hamlin-supported health clinics across rural Ethiopia, these trained professionals also support, nurture and empower women while sharing invaluable knowledge, building trusted networks and transforming entire communities.

Last year Hamlin midwives provided short term family planning to 88,566 women, antenatal appointments to 21,950 pregnant women and attended 22,344 deliveries – all fistula free.

The Hamlin College of Midwives continues to be a centre of excellence for the training of midwives and last year despite the challenges



of Covid-19, 25 students graduated. They have now been deployed into rural government health centres across the country, providing thousands of women with family planning services and skilled healthcare during pregnancy and labour.

In May 2021, the Hamlin College of Midwives was delighted to welcome 20 new students for the 2021-22 academic year. This year, following consultation with government health bodies at the Federal level the college has for the first time focused recruitment entirely on students from the Gambela and Benishangul regions of western Ethiopia. Training students from these remote areas will have a significant impact on improving maternal healthcare services in both regions.



Medanit's story

"I still feel the unbearable pain that I was in during the labour," Medanit told us, "All traditional medications known in the village were given to me, but none pulled me out of that pain".

It's not easy for Medanit, 25, to remember that time, but thankfully we are meeting on a happier occasion – the birth of a daughter by safe caesarean section at Yirgalem Regional Fistula Hospital. Medanit grew up in a remote rural village in Ethiopia's Oromia region.

During her first pregnancy, because of the distance to the local health centre, she did not seek any midwifery support and her family encouraged her to give birth at home in the village. However, when the time came to give birth, tragically Medanit suffered an obstructed labour and stillbirth resulting in a fistula.

Medanit suffered at home, incontinent, for three years as the clinic she had attended was not aware of services for fistula.

Thankfully, one market day Medanit and her father heard an announcement from Hamlin's community outreach team about services at Yirgalem Regional Fistula Hospital. Her father didn't waste any time and immediately sold one of his cattle to pay for someone to take them to Yirgalem, a full day's bus drive away from their village.

Medanit was admitted as an inpatient, and provided with fistula surgery free of charge, which was a success: *"My cure was like a miracle!"* she told us. Medanit explained that she felt she had been given her life back, and she returned home to her family, armed with advice from our team that if she became pregnant again she should return to Hamlin for a safe caesarean section.

"I can't thank you enough for what you are doing for women like myself".

“Great work #HamlinFistulaEthiopia”

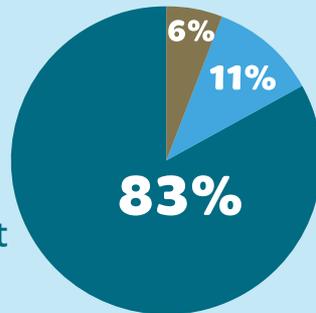
– Lia Tadesse, Minister, Ethiopia Ministry of Health, Twitter, August 2021



2020-2021

How your donations were spent

- Raising Funds
- Administration
- Obstetric Fistula Treatment and Prevention



Thank you!



The support of generous donors is what makes our work possible. We would like to thank our current organisational supporters:

Band Aid Charitable Trust
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The Big Give
Caring and Sharing East Sussex

We would also like to thank all donors who wish to remain anonymous and our generous individual donors, friends and volunteers.

Hamlin Fistula UK is dedicated to the treatment and prevention of childbirth injuries in Ethiopia. We believe in a world without maternal death, birth injuries or obstetric fistula and support Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia to work towards this vision.

We are part of the international family of Hamlin charities, founded by pioneering surgeons Dr Reg Hamlin OBE and Dr Catherine Hamlin AC. They established the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in 1974 to treat the devastating childbirth injury, obstetric fistula, which leaves women incontinent and often subject to severe social stigma. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia now operates six hospitals, a rehabilitation centre and midwifery training college. To date, Hamlin hospitals have successfully treated over 60,000 women.

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