

Donations

The Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital is a hospital that cares specifically for poor women with childbirth injuries. These women come to us destitute, the last goat or cow has been sold, they come in nothing but their urine-soaked clothes and more often than not barefoot.

They have been abandoned by the very ones who should care for them and we are their only hope. Because of this we charge them nothing; all care and treatment and surgery is completely free of charge.

The hospital is a registered charity in the Ministry of Justice and we have charitable organizations around the world who support the hospital exclusively. You are welcome to send your donations through them and they will ensure that the hospital receives your kind gift.

Thank you!



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The Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital for poor women with childbirth injuries

Ethiopia

This country the size of France and Spain put together has a population reaching seventy million. Maternal deaths and disabilities are the highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Most of the women live out their lives espoused to subsistence farmers on rocky mountainsides or pastoralists in the dry arid deserts.

History

Drs. Reginald and Catherine Hamlin, both Gynaecologist-Obstetricians, came to Ethiopia to work at the Princess Tsehai Memorial Hospital in 1959. They were pioneers in performing surgery for women suffering from Obstetric Fistula in Ethiopia in 1959 and the need became so great that in 1974 they established Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital specifically for women with childbirth injuries.

Goal

The overall goal of the hospital is to provide services for those suffering from childbirth and related injuries, rehabilitating them to the point where they can be integrated back into their society with dignity and a sense of self-worth.



Target population

Three million women in Ethiopia become pregnant each year, of this 0.3% will develop obstetric fistulae. This represents 9,000 new cases each year plus old cases unreached previously.

The Patient



Having suffered untold trauma during labor, mourning the stillbirth of her baby, ostracized by her community she comes to the hospital in her urine-soaked clothes where she learns to smile again. Once operated on and cured she will return home in a new dress and to a renewed life.

The Hospital

The hospital turns no patient with childbirth injuries away. A space is always found, a fully trained experienced doctor examines her gently and then plans are made for surgery. 1200 operations are done every year, the average stay is three weeks.



The Staff

Six obstetricians – gynaecologists, seven full-time nursing sisters and three part-time nursing sisters along with almost fifty former patients now nursing aids give the overall care to each hurting woman who comes to the hospital.

In addition to this there are pharmacy, laboratory, teaching, administrative and ancillary staff to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Training

So many regional health facilities now have obstetric gynaecologists; these specialists if trained in Ethiopia have all spent two months at the hospital learning how to manage and repair obstetric fistulae. We have also trained nurses from the regions to provide good nursing care of obstetric fistulae patients.

Outreach

It has been brought to our attention that many women are still unable to reach us due to lack of finance, so we have decided to go to them. Five outreach centers are in various stages of development throughout the regions of Ethiopia. In these centers we will give shelter and service for the care of women with childbirth injuries and women considered at high risk for childbirth injuries to facilitate medical assistance for them.

Desta Mender

Sadly some of the patients who come to us are unable to be cured completely or return home. Many of these have been trained as nursing aids; still there are more and for these we have built a delightful place called Desta Mender (Joy Village). In each of the ten houses ten women live together as a family, there is a central community hall, a training center for teaching skills and literacy and the farm with cattle and chickens. Thus a home has been created for those so traumatized that they can never be what they were before the childbirth injury.



Prevention

The tragedy of obstetric fistula is that it is preventable, if women can get to a hospital in time, if there are funds to get her there, if there is someone who knows she should go and if the necessary service is provided (EMOC) on time she would never have had this disaster happen to her. So we are using every means available to get the message out that early intervention will prevent the heartache faced by our poor women.