

The **HAMLIN Newsletter** is published quarterly by Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, and distributed to its members.

Shining Back: A Rebirth from Years of Agonizing Life

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Urogynecology Fellowship Program 1st Round Graduation



of Health Sciences, members of the university community, honored guests from overseas, and families and friends of the graduates.

President of Mekelle University, Professor Kindeya G/Hiwot, congratulated the graduating students on the occasion and reminded them of their responsibility to serve their people honestly and exert their respective efforts to

Upon successfully completing their subspecialty study, the first intakes of the Urogynecology Fellowship Program, Dr Fekade Ayenachew from the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and Dr Melaku Abriha from Mekelle Hamlin Fistula Center graduated, along with the 9th batch graduates of College of Health Sciences of Mekelle University, on March 10, 2018.

The ceremony was attended by HE Professor Yifru Birhan, Minister of the Federal Ministry of Health, Professor Kindeya G/Hiwot, President of Mekelle University, Senate members of the University, the management of the College

ensure the delivery of quality health services to the public. "The major driver behind our transformation has been our strategy to listen, observe, monitor and then act. Thus, at Mekelle University, we have been able to implement a thoroughly unique curriculum, one that aligns directly with the needs of society. We have reached this stage by listening and responding to the world around us, a strategy that will benefit you as you, too, progress to a new job, a new career, and a new life."

Guest of honor, HE Professor Yifru Birhan also congratulated the graduates and

their families during the occasion. “It is a great honor for me to be talking with you today on this very exciting occasion. I am delighted to have the opportunity to address such a talented gathering of hard-working graduating students. This is a great day for you and your families, and I am very happy to be sharing it with you! All I say is know what you want, and then work hard. I am hopeful that your contributions to the Ethiopia’s health sector will be enormous,” he addressed.

During the ceremony, certificate of appreciation was also presented to Professor Kindeya G/Hiwot, Professor Lewis Wall, Dr Renate Roentgen, Dr Karen Gold and Dr Amanuel Haile by Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia for their contributions to the successful realization of the program, launched with a collective vision of building a strong educational, clinical and research training in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery in sub-Saharan Africa.

The urogynecology program, which is a joint subspecialty fellowship among Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, Worldwide Fistula Fund and Mekelle

University College of Health Sciences, consists of three consecutive years of urogynecology training designed to provide the fellows with ever-increasing patient care responsibilities and to achieve full competence in all aspects of diagnosis and management of women with conditions that fall within the limits of urogynecology and female urology. It is the first of its kind in Ethiopia and is accredited through Mekelle University.

Urogynecology, also known as Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery, is a specialty focused on the care of women with pelvic floor dysfunction such as incontinence (urinary and fecal leakage), prolapse (bulging or falling of the vaginal tissues), and pelvic pain.



HFE Welcomes New Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia(HFE) has welcomed a new Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO), Ato Tesfaye Mamo, as of April 2018. Ato Tesfaye brings over 20 years of experience in government and non-government organizations.

In his capacity as DCEO, Ato Tesfaye will lead HFE's operational and programmatic deliveries with the Senior Management Team. Welcoming his new role, Ato Tesfaye said, "This is a great honor, and I value highly the trust and

confidence placed in me by the Board of Trustees and the CEO. I relish the challenge of being closely involved in Hamlin's ongoing strategic evolution, and further strengthening its reputation as a pioneering and highly-respected player in the treatment and prevention of fistula."

Prior to joining HFE, Ato Tesfaye served as a General Manager for TZNA General Hospital, Managing Director for RANK Family PLC, Managing Director for Black Lion

Hospital, College of Health Sciences, Addis Ababa University, Assistant Dean, Administration and Finance for School of Medicine, Addis Ababa University, and Senior Management Team member at the Ethiopian Red Cross.



Ato Tesfaye holds two Master's Degrees, one in Logistics and Supply Chain Management from Addis Ababa University, and the other in Transformational Leadership and Change from University of Greenwich, United Kingdom. His research interest includes health care management, service quality, patient satisfaction, hospital leadership and optimization of patient flow.

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's staff and Senior Management Team warmly welcome Ato Tesfaye and wish him all the best in his leadership role.

Hamlin Holds Donation Reception

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE) held a donation reception of Dr. Taffara Deguefe's residence on May 10, 2018. The reception was attended by Dr. Catherine Hamlin, management members, staff, Dr. Taffara's relatives and invited guests.

Speaking at the reception, Dr. Tesfaye Yacob, HFE CEO thanked Belaineh Taffara and Taitu Taffara, the late Dr. Taffara's surviving children, for transferring their inherited residence to Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. "This is a huge donation, and it contributes a lot to our fistula treatment and prevention efforts. On behalf of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, I truly thank them both, though they are unable to attend this event, for respecting their father's intention and transferring the residence to our organization."

Dr. Teshome Tafesse, HFE Communications Manager, also expressed his appreciation for the late Dr. Taffara and thanked his surviving children. "Dr. Taffara passed away before he could formally proceed with his intention to transfer the property to the Hospital, but his children, Belaineh and Taitu, both Candadin citizens, have supported their father's intention and transferred the property to Hamlin. I thank them both on behalf our staff and fistula survivors," he added.

During the ceremony, certificate of appreciation was also presented, through their family members, to Belaineh Taffara and Taitu Taffara.

In recognition of the selfless efforts of the founders of the Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, the late Dr. Taffara Deguefe, first appointed Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia, had an expressed intention to give to the hospital his only family residence in Addis Ababa.

Dr. Taffara passed away in Vancouver, Canada, in 2015.



HCM to Start Ultrasound Services in Rural Clinics

Hamlin College of Midwives (HCM) provided a 10-week intensive ultrasound training to a total of 10 trainees, drawn from mentors, midwives and instructors, with the mission of launching ultrasound services in its Hamlin supported government rural clinics.

“The training, provided in consultation with the Radiological Society of Ethiopia and Addis Ababa University, is part of the College’s effort in improving the quality of care for pregnant mothers in 48 Hamlin supported rural clinics throughout Ethiopia,” said Ato Zelalem Belete, Dean of the College and Hamlin Prevention Manager. “Ultrasound can save the lives of mothers and babies. We are now able to deliver a training that will bring lifesaving antenatal point of care ultrasound services within easier reach for rural communities. The lack of midwives, who are trained to perform antenatal ultrasounds, as well as a lack of equipment, is a widespread problem putting lives at risk,” he added.

The training, which incorporated both theory and practice, will

enable Hamlin midwives to identify pregnancy related abnormalities as early as possible and contribute to preventing obstetric fistula and maternal morbidity and mortality in general.

Following the completion of the training, five portable ultrasound machines with rechargeable batteries will be made available in Hamlin supported government clinics. The cost of the training, including the purchase of ultrasound machines, is fully funded by Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation, the Australian aged and leading partner organization in supporting the whole works of HFE.

Ultrasound scans during pregnancy are considered to provide vital information for a pregnant woman and the health professional, such as an estimated due date for the baby, which can be crucial in diagnosing complications.



Quarter III Review Meeting

Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE) held its Quarter III Review meeting on April 30, 2018 at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. The meeting, attended by a total of 28 staff members, including the CEO, management team, center heads, fistula surgeons and mentors, provided a platform to assess the performance of the organization over the third quarter of the fiscal year.

In his welcoming speech, Dr. Demissew Beyene, Planning and Program Manager, highlighted that the quarterly review meeting enables us to evaluate over performance, and identify challenges and ways to improve. He also thanked all the program owners for their

unreserved efforts to improve the overall performance of the organization during the third quarter.

“In the past two quarters of the fiscal year, despite some challenges, we have achieved significant performance improvement in all our programs, and I’m hopeful that we have maintained the progress in the third quarter under

review,” said Dr. Tesfaye Yacob, the CEO, in his opening remark. “Even so, we still have a long way to go, and only through a joint effort will we be able to reach our fundamental goals. In this sense, I consider this review as taking on transcendental role for the performance of the fiscal year,” he added.



A total of 13 presentations, accompanied by discussions under three categories, were made. The presentations and discussions showed an improvement in the performance of the organization during the third quarter, despite some challenges.

The participants shared successes, challenges, lessons learned and recommendations.

10 Day Ethiopian Adventure 2018

A team of 12 individuals, who were able to commit their time and enthusiasm to fundraising for Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, joined Hamlin 10 Day Ethiopian Adventure 2018, a unique travel opportunity whereby participants take part in an intimate tour of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. Each member also succeeded in raising a minimum of \$10,000, which can fund life-changing surgeries for more than 15 fistula patients, or the training costs for a local Ethiopian midwifery student who will go back to her village and help the women and girls in her area to give birth safely.

The team was warmly welcomed by HFE Senior Management Team and staff members on March 6, 2018 at the Addis Ababa Fistula Ethiopia. During the welcoming ceremony, Dr. Teshome Tafesse, HFE Communications Manager, thanked the team members for their enthusiasm and support. “You are so much inspired by the work of Dr. Catherine Hamlin and Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. We highly value your visit and donation. I want to thank you on behalf of Hamlin Fistula

Ethiopia, Dr. Catherine Hamlin, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia’s staff, and of course, our fistula survivors, for joining our vision of eradicating obstetric fistula altogether from Ethiopia and beyond.”

In addition to participating in the 5 km International Women’s Day Run, the team visited the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, the Hamlin College of Midwives, Desta Mender (Hamlin Rehabilitation and Reintegration Center) and Yirgalem Hamlin Fistula Center.



The Youngest Hamlin Outreach Center



Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia (HFE) has a long history of excellence in providing free and holistic services for thousands of Ethiopian poor rural women with obstetric fistula. Over half of the services have been managed through, the used to be one and only, Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital based in the capital city, Addis Ababa .

Before the establishment of Hamlin outreach centers, fistula patients from different corners of the country had to travel long to Addis Ababa, which was costly and above all required someone, with experience, to accompany. Those who did not manage to travel had to stay with fistula for additional years, even after they heard of the hospital and its free services.

15 years back Hamlin took the commitment to resolve such a challenge through strategically building outreach

treatment centers in the four directions. The plan was successfully realized with the Bahir Dar and Mekele centers in the North, Yirgalem in the South, Harar in the East and Mettu in the South West.

Mettu Hamlin Fistula Center, with almost 8 years of service, is the youngest of all. It is sited in South West Ethiopia, Oromiya Region, Illu Ababora Zone Administration, Mettu town. Following its construction in the premises of Mettu Karl Government Hospital, the center started fully functioning in September 2010.

The center has one horizontally built building, which incorporates a clean ward of 40 beds, Operations Theater, OPD and offices, and a beautiful garden full of flowers and banana plants. Every day after lunch, it is common to see staff and fistula survivors sitting and drinking coffee together under the trees.

According to Ato Tibebe Abate, the center's Manager, the catchment population that the center is expected to serve is about 13 million and over the past 8 years close to 15 hundreds fistula patients have received successful surgeries. In addition to the treatment, the center has been providing ambulance and mentoring services for Hamlin supported government health centers, now reached 14, under its supervision.

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"It was not my wish to discontinue my education and get married, but my family wanted. I had to abide by my family's rules. In our community, a man requesting a woman for marriage should pay 4 thousand birr and present 4 cows to her family. My family, therefore, was attracted to this present, and I got married at 13 to a man much older than me," she recalls.

At 15, Tsehay conceived, and it was happy news for the families on both sides. The happiness, however, short-lived, only for nine months. The four day painful labor at her mother's home was unsuccessful, and Tsehay was carried on a handmade stretcher towards the closest government clinic, 5 hours walk distance.



As time was already over for Tsehay to be treated at the clinic, she was referred to the closest government hospital in ambulance lying between death and life. On the fifth day, she was made to give a stillbirth through surgery, and luckily she stayed alive but left under a condition she had never heard of--double fistula

Knowing nothing to do about it, Tsehay was discharged from the hospital and went back home. "It was unbearable. I was spending the whole day lying on a soaked bed. Because of the stench, no one wanted to get close to me even my own brothers. I stayed in such agony for three years," she remembers.

In those three years, it was her mother and older sisters who took care of her. Her husband disappeared after a while and he never returned home ever since. Three years later, Tsehay heard of our hospital from a priest at the closest church who incidentally appeared to see her condition.

With the support of the church and the nearby government hospital, she arrived at Mettu Fistula Center two years ago. Given her five days long labor and three years stay without treatment, she was totally losing control of her body. “The moment I saw other women with the same problem at Mettu I became hopeful. I want to thank the staff at Mettu center for their unconditional love and care,” Tsehay says.

Almost a year ago, Tsehay arrived at our Addis Ababa main hospital and stayed under different levels of treatment. The final complex surgery she received in February 2018 totally cured her. She is now receiving rehabilitation training at Desta Mender, which incorporates life and business skills, and counseling.

Tigist, our learning coordinator, has been closely following Tsehay’s condition, and says, “ Tsehay is one of the few uniquely talented fistula survivors I have met. She is very passionate to learn more every day and is one of the best handicraft makers. After the successful surgery, her behavior has totally changed and she is so much happier now.”





Get Involved

Join Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's effort to END FISTULA. If you want to find out about ways of getting involved, or have any questions about Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, please contact us.

Editor's Note

The **HAMLIN Newsletter** is published quarterly for the staff, partners, volunteers and visitors of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia. Comments, suggestions and story ideas are welcome.

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