

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

Dr Catherine Hamlin AC

60
years

Catherine Hamlin
Fistula Foundation



Celebrating the woman who gave life to an idea, Dr Catherine Hamlin



2019 marks 60 years since Drs Catherine and Reg Hamlin first arrived in Ethiopia. It is also the year Dr Catherine Hamlin celebrates her 95th birthday, a true milestone.

To date, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia has treated more than 60,000 Ethiopian women who have suffered the most horrific childbirth injury - obstetric fistula.

On the evening of their arrival in Ethiopia in 1959, a fellow gynaecologist said, “The fistula patients will break your hearts.” And indeed they did.

The Hamlins set about dramatically transforming the maternal health landscape for Ethiopian women. After Reg’s death in 1993, Catherine refused to leave. She was determined to carry on her dream of eradicating fistula. Forever.

Catherine has pioneered the way in providing complete treatment for women suffering with a fistula. Surgical repair, rehabilitation and counselling all form the elements of Catherine’s world leadership in best practice treatment.

At 95, Catherine still lives at the hospital in Addis Ababa. She has been twice-nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and her work has continued uninterrupted for more than half a century.

What is obstetric fistula?

One of the worst things that can happen to a woman or girl is an obstetric fistula - an internal injury caused by a prolonged, unrelieved obstructed labour. A fistula is a hole between the birth canal and the bladder or rectum. It leaves survivors leaking urine or faeces, and sometimes both.

93% of obstetric fistula survivors give birth to a stillborn baby. If that wasn't horrific enough, these women are ostracised and pushed to the edge of their society - forgotten and invisible.

With access to quality maternal healthcare, this horrific childbirth injury is preventable. In fact, in western countries, obstetric fistula is virtually a thing of the past.



The Hamlin Model of Care

The Hamlin Model of Care is grounded in fundamental respect for the patient and a strong commitment to provide complete and compassionate care. Based on Dr Catherine Hamlin's core values, the model remains central to the organisation's ethos today.

“We do not treat just the hole in the bladder. We treat the whole patient with love and care, literacy and numeracy classes, a new dress and money to travel home.”

Dr Catherine Hamlin AC

Treatment:

Restoring health and dignity

An obstetric fistula can usually be repaired with a single life-changing surgery.

1,023 women were provided with major fistula repairs in FY2018

Under Dr Catherine Hamlin's leadership, the treatment for women suffering with an obstetric fistula is focused on not just repairing the injury, but also restoring dignity. Patients coming to Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia receive a customised program that includes nutrition, physiotherapy, counselling, treatment and rehabilitation.

The Hamlin clinical team is globally renowned for its treatment technique. Surgeons from around the world train at Hamlin to learn this acclaimed best practice for fistula surgery.

In addition to Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, five regional hospitals have been established for fistula surgery. All six Hamlin hospitals also provide a birthing facility where former patients can return for a safe caesarean section delivery, free of charge.

“This life changing surgery restores their health and dignity.”

Oprah Winfrey



Prevention:

Training local midwives

Dr Catherine Hamlin's fight to eradicate fistula has seen her lead a program of prevention throughout Ethiopia. The Hamlin College of Midwives recruits students from rural areas, puts them through a rigorous degree in Midwifery, and deploys them back to their villages where their skills are needed.

This is a cornerstone of Catherine's vision - ensuring that women in Ethiopia have access to quality health care to prevent fistula injuries in the first place.

Since 2007, 145 Hamlin midwives have graduated from the college. They are working in over 65 Hamlin Midwifery Clinics in rural health centres. When a Hamlin midwife arrives, new cases of fistula drop to almost zero in nearby villages.

23,377 babies were delivered by Hamlin midwives in FY2018

Rehabilitation:

Isolation to independence

Beyond the physical mending of scars and injury, Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia provides rehabilitation programs at Desta Mender, a farm and training centre established in 2002. Here, recovering fistula sufferers, and the 5% whose fistulas cannot be repaired, are supported to regain their physical and mental health and are empowered to reintegrate back into their community with dignity and choices.

These patients receive training in vocational and life skills. With the help of start-up grants facilitated by Hamlin, some women, like Fetenech, have gone on to establish their own businesses.

912 patients completed literacy and numeracy courses in FY2018



Mamitu - from fistula sufferer to world renowned fistula surgeon

Like so many staff and patients, to Mamitu Gashe Dr Catherine Hamlin is family. She affectionately calls her Emaye (Mother). They have been a team for almost 60 years, and both dream of eradicating obstetric fistula in Ethiopia.

Mamitu came to the hospital as a patient in 1962 at the age of 16 with a horrific obstetric fistula injury. She was so grateful for the care she received that she decided to dedicate her life to helping other women with a fistula.

Catherine and Reg saw something special in Mamitu and initially she helped to make the beds - but it was not long before Mamitu was helping in theatre.

Mamitu is now one of the world's most skilled fistula surgeons. In 2018 she was listed on the BBC News list of 100 Inspirational Women.

Mamitu has a special love and empathy for the patients. Catherine says she has seen her many times with tears in her eyes as she welcomes patients to Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital - where she still works today.



The Hamlin Shop

Discover our huge range of ethically made gifts from Africa, including products made by recovering fistula patients at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia.

Patient-made products include Ethiopian cotton wraps, paper bead necklaces and embroidered bookmarks. Each purchase supports the patient who made it!

Your order is packed with love by our volunteers. We offer worldwide shipping.



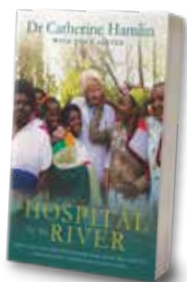
Three easy ways to shop

1. Online at store.hamlin.org.au
2. Over the phone 02 9440 7001
3. At our Sydney gift shop -
1396 Pacific Highway Turrumurra NSW

“Dr Hamlin stands as a source of courage, support and inspiration to all of us.”

Dame Quentin Bryce

Read the best selling book **Hospital by the River** by Dr Catherine Hamlin (with John Little) for the remarkable life story of Reg and Catherine. Visit store.hamlin.org.au





We believe we can eradicate fistula in Ethiopia by 2030 - but we need your help!

To celebrate Dr Catherine Hamlin's 60 years of service and 95th birthday, will you become one of our valued Hamlin monthly donors? A life-changing standard fistula operation costs \$600, so a gift of \$50 a month can pay for one within a year.

If you would like to help in this way, call us on 02 9440 7001 or visit hamlin.org.au/regulargiving

Your donation changes lives

\$60 can help us locate untreated fistula sufferers

\$600 can fund one standard fistula operation to restore a woman's life

\$4,500 can fund a one-year scholarship for a student at the Hamlin College of Midwives

Join the movement!



Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation

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