

Hamlin Fistula NZ



MARCH 2021



*They leave us,
on dancing feet,
with a new dress
and hope
for the future*

- Dr Catherine Hamlin

Dr Catherine Hamlin dedicated over 60 years of her life to restoring the lives and dignity of over 60,000 Ethiopian women with fistula. She always believed that treating a fistula patient isn't just treating a hole in the bladder, but rather the whole patient.

That's why, in 2002, Dr Catherine Hamlin founded Desta Mender ('Joy Village'), a recovery centre where longer-term fistula patients with more severe injuries can continue to heal. Some women with complex cases may need multiple surgeries and ongoing care. Having suffered trauma and isolation, many cannot return to their communities and few have an income that allows them to live independently.



Empowering *every* woman

Hamlin's rehabilitation and reintegration program at Desta Mender is tailored to each woman and offers counselling, literacy and numeracy classes as well as vocational and life skills training. The Hamlin team supports women to find sustainable employment upon reintegration back into their communities. In some cases, this also includes the facilitation of start-up grants to establish their own business, enabling these women to generate an income.

The Hamlin Model of Care is a critical aspect of rebuilding self-belief and empowering women to live independently, with dignity and choices - women like Hajete. A recent patient at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's Desta Mender, like most young women at age 22, she dreams of a happy and independent life, and even the opportunity to start her own business.

Two years ago, her dreams were very different.

Like many Ethiopian women, when Hajete went into labour at 16 years old, she was at home without a midwife or doctor. For days, she struggled through a painful

labour and eventually delivered a stillborn baby.

The long, unrelieved obstructed labour caused severe nerve damage and left holes in both her bladder and rectum, leaving her permanently incontinent. Suffering from social rejection and the insupportable shame of her condition, she fled from her village to the comparative anonymity of a nearby town.

It was four years before she arrived at Hamlin and was finally cured.

Not long after, Hajete began Hamlin's program at Desta Mender, where she received individualised counselling as well as business, leadership and life skills training. With her earnings from selling embroidery during her stay at the hospital and a grant of 10,000 ETB to start up her own small business, she returned to her community. After assessing the market, she agreed on a deal ("Tirf yegara") with a reliable businessman in cattle fattening. With his premises, her capital start-up of three sheep, three goats and two heifers and with shared expenses, she now runs a profitable stock business.

In November Hajete was back at the hospital for a medical follow-up visit and told her experience to fellow patients at the usual coffee ceremony. She encouraged them, "Never give up - even if you do not have anyone to turn to." She continued, saying that she can now pay for all her daily and monthly expenses, including rent. With the profit from her first sheep sold, she is also maximizing her business on selling vegetables at the local market, as well as making baskets in her spare time.

Today, Hajete is a successful businesswoman. She explains that this is possible because of the treatment and empowerment she received from Hamlin. The holistic support she received restored her spirit. "Thanks to Hamlin", she said, "now after two years, my life has been changed remarkably. I can now look back to my suffering and say, 'It is past.'"

Updates from Addis Ababa

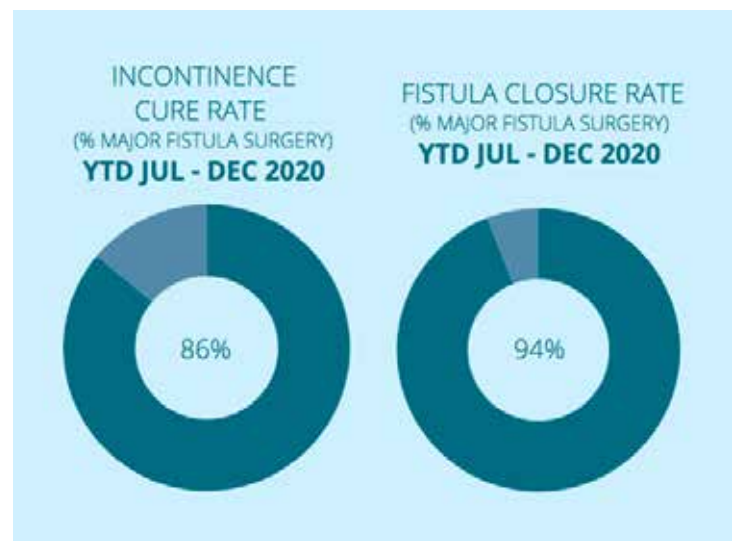
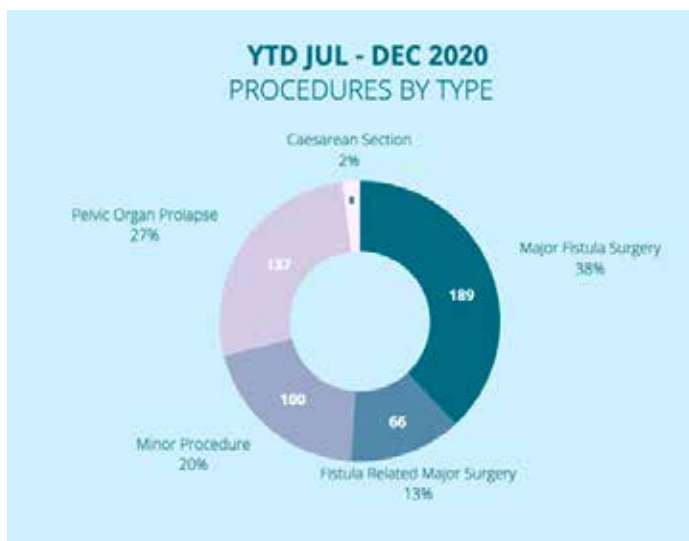
The extraordinary medical professionals at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia have made significant progress over the last few months, despite the enormous challenges they have faced. Their unwavering determination to continue Dr Catherine Hamlin's work is an inspiration to all.

Through the newly developed Treatment Dashboard, Hamlin's Management and Clinical Teams are able to assess the progress of each of Hamlin's six obstetric fistula hospitals. The results are very encouraging, given the continued impact of COVID-19 on patient flow.

A vital tool in making the best decisions

The Treatment Dashboard is used to record patient admission rates, the number and type of surgical procedures undertaken, the fistula closure rate, the incontinence cure rate and the number of patients and outpatients discharged at each of Hamlin's six hospitals. Through monthly updates to the dashboard, Hamlin's Management and Clinical Teams can monitor and evaluate each hospital's performance. By collating this data, the Hamlin Team can make informed, timely decisions on each hospital's treatment program.

Below are key data points from Hamlin's hospitals from July to December of 2020.



Midwife graduates' success

Despite the challenges of Covid restrictions on study and practicums, all 25 of the 2020 Hamlin College of Midwives graduates passed the national board exams with good results. Once again, we are so proud of our Hamlin midwives.



HFNZ building project

We are so pleased to report that the Bensa midwives' accommodation project in the Yirgalem region is complete, with Gobe's construction (in the Mettu region) making progress.

Giving to Hamlin in 2021

After 31 May 2021, ANZ will no longer accept cheques for deposit into Hamlin Fistula NZ's accounts. We apologise for any inconvenience and are aware that so many of our faithful supporters will be affected by this move. We are working hard to make giving as easy as possible for you.

There will be three ways to give:

AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS

If you would like to set up automatic fortnightly or monthly giving (or whatever suits you) through your bank, please identify yourself clearly in the reference section so that we can receipt you.

DIRECT INTERNET BANKING

Please identify yourself clearly on the payment details and register your donation details through our secure webpage <https://www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate.html> so that we can identify your payment for your tax receipt.

ONLINE DONATION WITH VISA/MASTERCARD

This is done through our link on our donations page <https://www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate.html> or <https://donorbox.org/hamlin> to our secure donation platform (4% will be deducted for their merchant fees).

As of April, receipts for giving via automatic and direct internet banking will be issued once a year, unless otherwise requested. Donations through our online giving will be receipted at each donation by Donorbox.

Please accept our sincere thanks for your ongoing support!



Donate today to continue the journey for other women like Hajete

While we hope that people will be inspired to undertake the Hamlin Barefoot Challenge this month, we know that it is not possible for all our supporters.

You can still show your support and help to encourage others by donating today. Your tax-deductible gift will help to restore the lives of women like Hajete as they embark on their journey to a fistula-free future and continue Catherine Hamlin's vision to eradicate fistula forever.

Your gift can:

Provide pre-operative care for one patient \$120

Give a patient an extended physical rehabilitation program \$300

Enable one standard fistula operation in a Hamlin regional hospital \$700

Provide 50 women with a nightgown, dress and shoes \$1,600

Empower 50 women with support packs of household items when returning home \$5,000



HELP HAMLIN ERADICATE FISTULA

Give online at www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/donate or complete the form and post it back to us:

I WOULD LIKE TO: Donate a Hamlin General Donation: A/C 06 0817 0264043 00 Amount \$ _____

Donate to Administration Expenses of Hamlin Fistula NZ: A/C 06 0817 0264043 02 Amount \$ _____

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