



Winner

2016



A Private Sector Pioneer in Fostering Innovative Partnerships to Prevent and Treat Obstetric Fistula

For over 20 years, Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has pioneered programs and partnerships to prevent and treat obstetric fistula (OF), a debilitating injury of childbirth caused by prolonged, obstructed labor and lack of access to essential healthcare services, resulting in a woman leaking urine or feces and stigmatized in her community. J&J partnerships span prevention of obstetric fistula through emergency obstetric care, surgical treatment, rehabilitation and integration back into the community for these disenfranchised women. Recent work prioritizes nine high-prevalence countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

\$1.15
million
in sutures
distributed

sutures
supported
3925
surgeries

trained
1730
healthcare
workers

96%
of women felt
operation
was life-
changing

97%
feel more
accepted &
supported
by their
community

post-op
62%
able to provide
more financial
support for
themselves &
families



INTRODUCTION

Currently, over two million women worldwide are living with obstetric fistula and every year an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 women are newly affected. The condition is most often the result of obstructed and unattended labor, during which the baby's head pushes against the mother's pelvic bone for a prolonged period, cutting off blood flow to the soft tissue and allowing it to die. Where the tissue dies, a hole is left between the mother's bladder and vaginal cavity or rectum; often resulting in a stillbirth and rendering the mother incontinent, subjecting her to extreme stigma and isolation from her family and community. Fistula primarily affects the most marginalized and vulnerable members of society—impoverished women and girls—and negatively impacts their physical and psychosocial health, as well as economic opportunities.

Though preventable, once a fistula has formed, surgery is the primary treatment. Existing global capacity to treat these women is approximately

On its "Transport My Patient" initiative, CCBR reports that, in 2014,

75%
of patients eligible for free
transportation used it to
come to the hospital

The pathway to stopping OBSTETRIC FISTULA



PREVENTION

The best way to address fistulas is to prevent them entirely. Ensuring expectant mothers have knowledge about pregnancy and access to quality healthcare services, like skilled birth attendants and emergency obstetric care, is the first crucial step to ensuring women like Amani can give birth safely.

We can make a difference and help women like Amani avoid suffering from an obstetric fistula.

Learn what others are doing to help and how you can get involved at www.endfistula.org

16,000 per year, leaving 70 percent of cases untreated. In response to this growing disparity, and as part of its broader commitment to saving and improving the lives of women and children, J&J has spent over two decades working with partners to develop holistic, need- and evidence-based programming to reduce the global burden of obstetric fistula.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Obstetric fistula remains a significant unmet health need, threatening the lives of thousands of vulnerable women and preventing them from achieving their full potential. Johnson & Johnson's commitment to save and improve the lives of women and children led the company to join forces with UNFPA in 2003 to launch the Campaign to End Fistula®, an innovative, multi-sector partnership that takes a holistic approach by working to prevent the condition from occurring and ensure that affected women have an opportunity to recover and regain their lives. In 2013, J&J made a Clinton Global Initiative commitment, to work together with partners to build up a workforce of surgeons trained to treat women with obstetric fistula.

J&J's efforts currently target nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia: Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Somalia, Tanzania, Liberia, and Bangladesh. Each of these countries has a high prevalence of obstetric fistula and a dedicated fistula elimination program or stated government commitment to address the issue, which is supported by J&J's programs. To date, J&J has contributed approximately US \$12 million in both cash and in-kind contributions towards its work to end fistula.

PREVENTION

To prevent obstetric fistula, it is critical that women are aware of the benefits of giving birth with a skilled provider, and have access to a qualified healthcare provider throughout pregnancy and during labor. With partners, including the Health 6 (UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, UNAIDS, WHO and the World Bank), Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Wellbeing Foundation and several midwifery schools, J&J improves the clinical skills of birth attendants and strengthens health systems. These programs focus on ensuring that there are adequate numbers of birth attendants who have clinical skills in normal birth, as well as emergency obstetrics, and who are supported with appropriate mentorship, equipment and facilities.

TREATMENT

The partnerships' approach to treatment is two-fold; it aims to address both the physical and the less tangible, but equally harmful, psychosocial and economic impacts of the condition. To treat the injury itself, J&J and partners work to improve women's access to effective and safe surgical care by training surgeons and their support staff; providing personnel with the necessary tools, equipment and supplies to perform such surgeries; and strengthening the services women need around receiving the surgery itself. Collaborating with an extensive network of global and in-country partners, J&J is:

- Donating sutures to complete 15,000 surgeries a year for three years, reducing the cost of the surgery and ensuring a secure supply of sutures. This donation will meet 80 percent of the current global capacity need for fistula surgeries.
- Building the capacity of a global network of surgeons and healthcare workers through grants that support training



for International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) fistula fellows and graduates, as well as providing them with additional donations of surgical tools. The company's support of the Fistula Foundation is contributing to the development of a "community of practice," through convening meetings and maintaining a web-based virtual network for fistula fellows, graduates and experts. The company dedicates US \$500,000 per year toward its capacity building and advocacy efforts.

- Removing barriers that prevent patients from obtaining care and treatment. For example, J&J funds the "Transport My Patient" initiative, which simultaneously addresses two obstacles to healthcare for vulnerable populations: affordability and transportation. The company is also exploring innovative approaches, including utilizing mobile money technology, to expand patient access.
- Providing comprehensive health care to all patients before and after surgery. Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia, with J&J support, strives to improve the general health of a woman living with OF prior to surgery by improving nutrition, iron and vitamin supplements. For many patients, treatment needs extend beyond the obstetric fistula itself. Treatment often includes physiotherapy for severe nerve damage, stress incontinence management, specialized treatment for stoma patients, psychological counselling and extended medical care for other ailments.

REINTEGRATION

The trauma of obstetric fistula is not solely physical. Women suffering from the condition are frequently forced from their homes, ostracized by their communities and robbed of economic opportunities that enable them to support themselves and afford the care they so desperately need and deserve. For this reason, J&J and its partners also fund rehabilitation and reintegration services which aim to "treat" the psychosocial and economic impacts of fistula. Cash contributions support the UNFPA-led Campaign to End Fistula, CCBRT, Kupona Foundation, Mabinti Centre, and Women and Health Alliance International (WAHA) to

provide women with counseling and life and job training skills to help them become financially independent and reintegrate into their communities.

ADVOCACY

Finally, Johnson & Johnson works on a global scale to raise awareness, drive broad cross-sector engagement, generate funding and build an advocacy network around obstetric fistula as a preventable and treatable condition which can and must be eliminated.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Inclusion of 'wrap-around' services to help women integrate back into society. Lessons learned from years of investing in programs and analyzing data provided by partners has directly informed the evolution of the objectives and strategies guiding the company's work on fistula and led to the expansion of its programmatic portfolio. Johnson & Johnson's two-pronged approach to fistula treatment, addressing first the physical and then the psychosocial and economic impacts of the condition, was developed in response to the findings of a comprehensive needs analysis conducted by in-country partner organizations with a deep understanding of the scope of the issue. This understanding led J&J to invest in post-surgery services that rehabilitate women – particularly those having suffered serious trauma – and to work to reintegrate them into communities.

Capacity building for different cadres of providers. The same needs analysis and ongoing engagement with partners on the ground led J&J to build on its essential donations of surgery equipment and supplies and invest in building a workforce of surgeons and their support staff who are trained to repair obstetric fistula. The surgery, while inexpensive, requires trained professionals, including surgeons, nurses, anesthesiologists and other health care providers to properly treat and care for patients. From 2014-2015 alone, J&J supported programs and partners that trained over 1,300 healthcare workers, expanding access to safe and effective surgery for thousands of women.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is a challenge to attract diverse group of stakeholders.

The scope, complexity, and impact of this program are made possible through the contribution of a diverse set of stakeholders who apply their specific capacities and knowledge to address the many gaps in fistula care and treatment - from supply side issues to provider capacity to establishing income-generating activities for women.

While J&J's position as a global leader in healthcare is central to its ability to attract and convene both multinational and local partners, additional resources and greater visibility are still needed in the fight to end fistula. Despite great successes in generating both funding and attention for fistula through J&J's various initiatives, it has proven challenging to rally additional multilateral companies to the cause. A robust measurement framework showing program impact, a strong investment case, and a clear outline of partner roles and responsibilities may improve partners' likelihood of becoming involved.

ABOUT JOHNSON & JOHNSON

The Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies comprises more than 265 operating companies utilizing research and science to develop innovative ideas, products and services that advance the health and well-being of people around the world. As the world's largest, broadly based healthcare company, Johnson & Johnson embraces its responsibility as both a business and a corporate citizen to deploy assets and expertise to pioneer solutions that reach communities where the needs are greatest.

LEARN MORE

Explore the "Ending Fistula, A Debilitating Childbirth Injury" program:

On the web:

- [Ending Fistula: A Debilitating Childbirth Injury](#)
- [Fistula Infographic](#)

In the news:

- [Build It and They Will Come: New Approaches to Eliminating Fistula and Other Maternal Morbidities](#)

To learn more about the program, please contact **Kimberlin Keller** at KKelle29@its.jnj.com.



For more than a decade, GBCHHealth has been presenting the Business Action on Health Awards to companies that exemplify a spirit of innovation and help set the agenda for addressing today's most important global health challenges. The awards represent a key opportunity to recognize success and best practices, while providing powerful examples that inspire others to redouble their own efforts. To learn more about the awards and GBCHHealth, visit www.gbchealth.org.

