

# POST- EFFECTS OF OBSTETRIC FISTULA AMONG WOMEN IN UGANDA; A CASE OF KITOVU MISSION HOSPITAL, MASAKA

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## Background

Obstetrical fistula (OF) is one of the public health challenges which is affecting numerous girls and women every day and this condition leaves them in a state of despair. Women affected by OF have to suffer not only the consequences of losing their children but are also social humiliation, shame and embarrassment. In Uganda, like other parts of the world, OF women are usually abandoned or divorced by their husbands when it becomes clear that their condition is chronic rather than transient. This abnormality is usually associated with delays in seeking or receiving appropriate emergency obstetric care which is an indicator of poor quality of obstetric care (Mselle, 2011; Mselle, 2013).

## Methods

A study was conducted among women aged 15-49 years who had experienced OF and been successfully treated/repared. This was a cohort that was being followed up by Kitovu Mission Hospital between 2010-2012. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used. The quantitative data was analyzed in Stata version 12 and data presented at three levels. A multinomial logistic regression was used at the multivariate level. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic and content analysis and verbatim quotation are presented in the paper.

## Results

Over 70% of the women received treatment after more than two years with 27.5% having had the repair after 10 years.

*“The fistula was operated on in 2006, after spending with it 17 years. It took me so long because I was ignorant about the fistula services”*

*I realized that I had fistula, after giving birth from home...from then, I realized that I had a big tear in my vagina where the urine passed uncontrollably. I rang my mother because I was young and knew nothing but it was my grandmother told me that it was fistula (Female respondent 30 years, Kampala)*

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Delays in responding to the situation is the major reason why reintegration also takes long for the women to be accepted in society

Most fistula victims were mainly those under age

*I got fistula in 1977 when I was 13 years old and lived with it for 24 years. It was such a long period for reasons of my ignorance (Female respondent 43years, Mbarara*

Although marriage is almost universal in Uganda, most OF women did not remain in marital union or failed to get married even after repair. Among the never married, only 26.8% were able to marry; 73.2% remained single, among the separated only 5.6% got married while 88.9% remained separated and among those who were married 22.9% separated.

*“...my husband’s departure hurt me most; he would have stayed around and comforted me, instead he ran off because of my condition*

*My attitude towards men changed. I no longer have the true love for men like the one I had before suffering from fistula.*

The above statements shows that those who are so close to the OF victims have also

## **Conclusion**

Most OF victims were young and had never been exposed to family planning. Their social life completely changed because of rejection from those who would have stood with them.