CHARACTERISING WOMEN WITH OBSTETRIC FISTULA AND UROGENITAL TRACT INJURIES IN TANZANIA

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Introduction
World Health Organisation (WHO) data suggest that more than two million women live with fistula and that an additional 50–100,000 are newly affected each year. In Tanzania, it has been estimated that there are between 1,200 and 3,000 new cases of obstetric fistula annually.

Methods
To characterize women undergoing surgery in 2011 for obstetric fistula repair at a disability hospital associated with Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania (CCBRT), we identified routinely collected data and input into an Access database.

Results
Women affected by obstetric fistulae in Tanzania are frequently young, poorly educated, primiparous, subsistence farmers or housewives and have experienced obstructed labour as a result of delays occurring at home and/or after reaching a health facility. The majority experienced stillbirth, particularly in cases of assisted or operative delivery. Success rates for fistula closure were high, at 91%, but residual incontinence on discharge from hospital was seen in 39%.

Conclusions
Longer-term follow-up is required to determine rates of disabling residual incontinence and to examine demographics in greater depth, including variation between regions and in urban, periurban and rural settings in Tanzania.