PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT OF OBSTETRIC FISTULA IN WOMEN PRESENTING FOR SURGICAL CARE IN TANZANIA

A. Fiander\textsuperscript{1,2}, M, Subila\textsuperscript{2}, T. Malinga\textsuperscript{2}, K. Siddle\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1}. Obstetrics and Gynaecology, School of Medicine, Cardiff University, UK
\textsuperscript{2}. Comprehensive Community Based rehabilitation in Tanzania (CCBRT) Disability Hospital, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Introduction
World Health Organisation data suggest that two million women live with the physical and psychosocial effects of obstetric fistula. As part of an expanded fistula programme in Tanzania, Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania (CCBRT) introduced an evaluation strategy to include impact of surgery on psychosocial aspects of obstetric fistula. This is an initial report documenting morbidity on admission.

Methods
A questionnaire assessing the impact of obstetric fistula was developed taking into account literature in the field including information on: patient contact information, transport costs and a set of statements regarding the effects of fistula. The effects were spread across five domains: the physical consequences of obstetric fistula, the effects of a difficult delivery and possible stillbirth, the experience of isolation, the inability to undertake daily living activities and feelings of depression. The questionnaire was administered in Kiswahili by Tanzanian counsellors shortly after admission of patients onto the fistula ward.

Results
A total of 100 fistula patients reported high rates of physical and psychosocial morbidity. Over half of the patients said they would not have been able to access treatment without the transport costs being covered.

Conclusions
Fistula patients are affected by extremely high rates of physical and psychosocial morbidity. Further work is required to validate assessment tools and confirm these findings, in addition to assessing contributing factors in greater detail over time, such as the effect of stillbirth and the impact of surgery. The findings suggest the need for a holistic approach to care for fistula patients.