Building Capacity in Pelvic Floor Health in Ethiopia:
A model of Academic and Non-Governmental Organization Partnership

Rahel Nardos, MD, MCR
Oregon Health and Science University/ Kaiser Permanente
Division of Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgery
Disclosure

• I have no relevant financial relationships to disclose
Ethiopia is one of 75 countries, which account for 95% of the world’s maternal, new born and child deaths.
In Sub-Saharan Africa, a woman’s lifetime risk of dying in pregnancy or childbirth is **1 in 36**, compared with **1 in 4900** in high income countries despite the fact that maternal death has declined by 44% since 1990.

“Every woman, every newborn, everywhere has the right to good quality care,” Executive summary, The Lancet, September 2016.
For every one woman who dies of childbirth, there may be Twenty others who suffer from devastating childbirth related morbidities.
Obstetric Fistula
Their stories
Pelvic Organ Prolapse
There is an estimated 250,000 women have symptomatic pelvic organ prolapse.
Although there are a handful of gynecologists who are expert obstetric fistula surgeons in Ethiopia, as of 2015, there were no formally trained urogynecologists in the country.
Surgery

“the neglected stepchild of global health”

The poorest one-third of the world’s population receives only 3.5% of surgeries undertaken worldwide.

Weiser TG et al, Lancet 2008 (1)
Farmer PE, World J Surgery 2008 (2)
Short term Surgical Mission Work
Health Systems Resilience

- How do we invest in local health infrastructure and staff training that would allow developing countries to create their own long-term Surgical and Clinical capacity?
Challenges

- Lack of awareness/Silent epidemic/Not an emergency
- Care has to be very cheap or free
- Surgical expertise necessary but not enough
- Ethical challenges with vulnerable population
- Training subspecialists in a setting where generalists are in dire shortage
- Shortage of surgical supplies
- Reintegration and prevention
- Health care infrastructure and Systems shortage
A model for sustainable global surgery program
Clinical/hospital leadership/infrastructure
Research Collaboration

POP outcome study

Post fistula urinary incontinence

Research Partners
Hamlin Fistula Hospital
Mekelle University
Healing Hands of Joy-Ethiopia
Terrewode –Uganda
World Wide Fistula Fund
OHSU
Community Partnership