

Bios of International Volunteer Doctors

Dr. Gloria Esegbona, a British national of Nigerian descent living in London, first became aware of obstetric fistula as a young girl in Nigeria. She remembers the ordeal of a friend's sister who suffered from obstructed labour and, soon after, started leaking urine and faeces uncontrollably. The woman died of a related infection. Years later, as a science student in London, Esegbona watched a documentary about obstetric fistula and thought, "That is what I want to do – help women deliver safely." A graduate of St. Bartholomews School of Medicine and Dentistry, Esegbona has worked at a number of maternity units in the in Kenya and The Gambia. "I sum up what is happening as M.A.D.," she tells UNFPA. "Mothers Are Dying – physically, psychologically and sociologically."

–Dr. Esegbona will be placed at The Babbar Ruga Fistula Hospital in Katsina.

Dr. Paul Hilton, a British national living in Newcastle upon Tyne, developed an interest in fistula surgery while working with Dr. John Lawson – late professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Ibadan, Nigeria – during the early 1980s. After Lawson's retirement in 1987, Hilton took over Lawson's referral practice of fistula cases from the North of England. In 1989, Hilton was awarded a scholarship to study fistula with Dr. Ann Ward at St Luke's Hospital in Anua, Nigeria. In subsequent visits to the hospital, he was involved in the teaching and training of local surgeons in the management of post-fistula stress incontinence. Hilton is currently a full-time NHS consultant in Urogynaecology and Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle.

–Dr. Hilton will be placed at The Maryam Abacha Women and Children's Hospital in Sokoto.

In August 2003, **Dr. William Meyer** – an American based in Tucson, Arizona – came across a *New York Times* article on Dr. Catherine Hamlin and her work at the world-renowned Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. Meyer travelled to Ethiopia the following year, in June 2004, where he observed dozens of fistula repairs by Hamlin and her surgical team over a two-week period. "I knew when I left that, given the chance, I could do this surgery," he tells UNFPA. "Not only that – I wanted to do it." Meyer has performed surgery in and around the bladder for 27 years. He currently serves as Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Arizona.

–Dr. Meyer will be placed at The Murtala Muhammad Specialist Hospital in Kano.

Dr. Ambereen Sleemi – an American living in Brooklyn, New York – developed an interest in obstetric fistula while in residency training in the mid 1990s at Louisiana State University. There she worked with Drs. Tom Elkins and L. Lewis Wall, senior staff at the University with extensive knowledge of obstetric fistula in Africa. After completing her training, Sleemi served as a volunteer physician in Nicaragua and Niger where she gained first-hand experience in fistula surgery. In July 2004, she began a fellowship in Pelvic Floor Reconstruction at the Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. "I will always be dedicated to fistula patients," she tells UNFPA. "I see the Fortnight project as a way to further my commitment to these women."

–Dr. Sleemi will be placed at the Birnin Kebbi VVF Centre.