



**FIGO**  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF  
GYNECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS

# Fighting Fistula: Building the Capacity of Fistula Surgeons

*Statement from the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), on the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula (23 May 2015)*

The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) supports the International Day to End Obstetric Fistula (23 May 2015).

FIGO is the only global organisation representing gynecologists and obstetricians, with Member Societies in 125 countries/territories. Its vision is for women of the world to achieve the highest possible standards of physical, mental, reproductive and sexual health and wellbeing throughout their lives. It is committed to working for the benefit of all women, especially those who suffer from highly distressing - yet largely treatable - conditions such as fistula.

Obstetric fistula - a hole between the vagina and rectum or bladder that is caused by prolonged obstructed labour - most commonly occurs among women who live in low-resource countries, who give birth without any access to medical help. The condition results, in nearly all cases, in the death of the baby and leaves the woman suffering from a range of health problems which include chronic incontinence. Traumatic fistula can be caused as a result of sexual violence. Fistula often has severe psychosocial and socioeconomic consequences that are brought on by social segregation, which in many cases results in loss of livelihood, isolation and feelings of shame and despair.

Through its ongoing Fistula Training Initiative, FIGO is actively involved in building the capacities of fistula surgeons in accredited training centres, using the 'FIGO Global Competency-Based Fistula Surgery Training Manual'. Training Fellows are chosen from countries with a high prevalence of fistula, and the Initiative is dedicated to helping them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to prevent obstetric fistula, and provide high quality surgical, medical and psychosocial care to women who have incurred fistula, whether during childbirth or because of inflicted trauma.

## Resources:

1. <http://figo.org/fistula-training-initiative>
2. <http://figo.org/committee-fistula>
3. <http://www.endfistula.org/public/>
4. [http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/obstetric\\_fistula/en/](http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/obstetric_fistula/en/)
5. <http://www.fistulafoundation.org/>