Female Genital Fistula: Policy Implications of the changing landscape in Bangladesh

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We have no conflict of interest to declare
Female Genital Fistula

- Anatomic defect
  - Urinary tract and/or colorectal tract with genital tract
- Obstructed labor
- Iatrogenic
- Pelvic or genital trauma
- Infection
Fistula Burden

- Globally 1-2 million women are living with fistula
- 50,000 to 100,000 are added every year
- In Bangladesh
  - 71,000 cases were estimated in 2003
  - Approximately 2000 new cases are added every year
Objective

• To explore the demographic profile of fistula cases
• To explore the direct causes of female genital fistula
• To explore the policy implications of preventing the occurrence of fistula
Methods

- Fistula cases who had repair surgery during 2012 to 2014 at National Fistula Center and three other major hospitals
- Data from clinical history sheet were analyzed
- Fistula was classified according to the decisions of the principal surgeon as recorded in the history sheet
Results: Age at Marriage

- **Over all mean:** 15.4 yrs
  - 95% CI: 15-15.8 yrs

- **Obstetric Fistula:** 15.5 yrs
  - 95% CI: 14.9-16.2 years

- **Iatrogenic Fistula:** 15.1 yrs
  - 95% CI: 14.5-15.6 yrs
• Over all mean: 18.1 yrs  
  – 95% CI: 17.6-18.6 yrs

• Obstetric Fistula at incident delivery: 18.4 yrs  
  – 95% CI: 17.6-19.2 years

• Iatrogenic Fistula at first delivery: 17.8 yrs  
  – 95% CI: 17.1-18.4 yrs
ANC Utilization:

- Some ANC utilization: 28%
  - 4 or more visits 12%
  - <4 visit 16%
- No ANC utilization: 72%
- No significant difference
  - Obstetric fistula vs. iatrogenic fistula $p=0.7$
Institutional Delivery: Incident delivery for Obstetric Fistula and first delivery for the Iatrogenic fistula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Fistula</th>
<th>Home delivery (%)</th>
<th>Hospital delivery (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obstetric Fistula</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iatrogenic Fistula</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over all</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- No significant difference: Obstetric vs Iatrogenic $p = 0.4$
- Obstetric trend: transport to hospital often delayed
Results:

- VVF (89%)
- RVF (11%)

**Type of Fistula**
- Obstetric Fistula: 73%
- Iatrogenic Fistula: 27%

**Iatrogenic Fistula**
- Post Gyn Hysterectomy: 18%
- Post CS: 7%
- Instrumental Delivery: 75%
Conclusions

- Age of marriage and age of delivery not causal factor for fistula
- More than 25% of all fistula cases were iatrogenic
- Gyn hysterectomy most common source of iatrogenic fistula
- Timely referral an evident gap in women laboring at home coming late for facility delivery
- Timely adequate obstetric care at facility
- Safe gynecological surgery only when required
Future plans

- More investigations required for understanding the changing dynamic between obstetric and iatrogenic fistula
  - Data for decision making
  - Prevention strategies
  - Quality assurance and quality improvement
Thank You