

# **PSYCHO-SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF OBSTETRIC FISTULA AMONG WOMEN ADMITTED AT CCBRT - DISABILITY HOSPITAL DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Obstetric fistula is a preventable and, in most cases, treatable childbirth injury that leaves women incontinent, ashamed and often isolated from their communities. It occurs when a woman or girl suffers prolonged, obstructed labour without timely access to an emergency Caesarean section, is one of the most neglected conditions in the field of women's health and rights (Turan, J.M et al, 2006) some of the victims of WF are very young and are not even privileged to have basic elementary school education. The term fistula refers to any abnormal passageway connecting two epithelium-lined organs. In Tanzania, there is a vesico-vaginal fistula rate of 350 cases per 100,000 Women population. Some women may live in seclusion in developing countries, and for many the responsibility to decide to seek healthcare in pregnancy, or even after prolonged labor falls to the husband or other family members, opportunities to improve their health conditions are indeed limited. The study intended to find out the psychosocial effects among the fistula victims, find out the economic effects and investigate the coping and survival strategies of victims living with VVF. The study found that Loss of value for life, loss of memory, loss of appetite, low self-esteem, loss of sleep hours, loneliness due to separation/divorce, inability to fulfill their roles as Wives and Mothers, worry of not being able to bear children in life as well as divorce and loss of dignity due to discrimination were the perceived psychological effects faced by victims of VVF. Inability of the victims to contribute in household income, inability of the victims to become financial self-independent hence being dependant to their husband / relatives in various aspects including where and when to seeking treatment as well as lack of purchasing power these were the most economic effects of victims living with WF. Isolating themselves from the community, refusal to remarry after divorce/separation, return to their parents to avoid shame and harassment from their husband, engage in petty business were the perceived coping strategies used by fistula victims. Basing on the finding of this study it is recommended that, in order to prevent the occurrence of Obstetric Fistula deliberate effort should be taken by the different health stake holders to improve maternal health services through provision of emergency obstetric care especially in rural areas along with training to equip health attendants with adequate knowledge, dissemination of right information through effective media about fistula condition its occurrences and availability of treatment amongst the fistula victims, sensitize the communities to reintegrate them.