

of their culture and the government should allow the practice. Since the law against FGM began to be enforced, the practice has been done in secret, and many girls are cut soon after birth.

18 Ruth Mbennah, Project Hannah Africa regional coordinator, as she works with Project Hannah teams throughout Africa to prayerfully and strategically reach out to women struggling through life's disappointments and trials and needing to experience God's love.

19 Mothers, fathers, teachers, and religious leaders to speak out strongly against the cultural practice of female genital mutilation, which is causing horrific physical and emotional pain for young girls and hindering their ability later in life to give birth because of scars and deformities.

20 Young girls in Central Asia, Ethiopia, India, Liberia, the Middle East, Mozambique, Nepal, Uganda, and other countries who are forced to marry before they are 18 (many as young as 6-14) and have no understanding of sexual relationships until they are forcibly raped by their much older husbands. Most married girls receive no education, and many are servants to their in-laws, who beat them, kill them, or drive them to commit suicide to escape their suffering. <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/341/facts.html>

21 Organisations that are working to help communities understand the dangers of female circumcision and for leaders who are committed to encouraging everyone to abandon this cultural practice, providing girls with a better chance to live healthy lives and protecting families from shunning. Pray that communities will celebrate the end of this potentially life-threatening procedure that causes unspeakable pain and suffering.

22 The enforcement of laws preventing families from performing FGM in covert and illegal ceremonies in the United States or to transport girls for this purpose. Many immigrants originally from Somalia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Egypt, and other countries take their girls out of the country to get the procedure done in what has been dubbed "vacation cutting."

23 People to have courage to speak out and educate others about the devastating harm caused by FGM. It remains almost universal in Somalia, Guinea, Djibouti, and Egypt, and there has been little discernible decline in Chad, Gambia, Mali, Senegal, Sudan, or Yemen. Please continue to pray, because the practice of cutting girls has declined in Kenya and Tanzania and rates have dropped by al-

most half in Benin, the Central African Republic, Iraq, Liberia, and Nigeria.

24 Emotional healing for the millions of FGM victims – little girls and women traumatised after being held down by several women, cut with (sometimes dull) knives, and left to bleed, all the while not really understanding what happened or why.

25 Courage to stand against the enormous pressure family members place on women to have their daughters submit to the practice of FGM. Ethiopian women can report family members to community change agents and receive their support in educating those who want the practice to continue.

26 More men to become part of the solution to the problem of FGM, putting an end to it by protecting their sisters, wives, daughters, and nieces. Men can be educated about the harms and damage FGM causes and taught to accept an uncut girl as an appropriate life partner for a respectable man.

27 Success for programmes that teach young girls about their rights to refuse to undergo FGM, about the dangers involved in the practice, and about where to receive help from community leaders.

28 Protection for those who teach communities the importance of educating girls and encouraging them to marry after the age of 18.

29 Courage for mothers who hate the horrible practice of FGM but find it impossible to go against strong traditional customs that often do not allow an un-circumcised girl to marry. Their economic stability depends on their having a husband to survive. Mothers feel they must guarantee their daughters' futures or they will become outcasts of their communities.

30 Community leaders to understand the importance of providing an education and skills training for girls, even those who have married at a very young age.

31 Community leaders to do more to convince older women who perform FGM to give up the practice and then for these leaders to train and employ the women in educating others. This new income will replace the income lost after they stop performing FGM.

Women of Hope broadcasts in more than 60 languages. PH's monthly prayer requests are used in 70 languages.

Praying for Victims of mutilation or fistula



Prayer Calendar
August 2014

English

Countless innocent lives have been crushed by the grotesque custom of female genital mutilation (also called female circumcision or genital cutting) and a devastating injury called fistula. In many countries, little is done to protect women and girls from these horrible conditions, and there are few resources to help victims cope and rebuild their lives.

One of the most common forms of torture is inflicted by mothers on millions of daughters each year in Africa and Asia. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also on the rise in the United States, Canada, and European countries. This violent cultural practice leaves emotional trauma that lasts a life time. It often causes infections, urinary difficulties, and scar tissue that makes childbirth dangerously difficult and increases maternal mortality.

Fistula is a horrible injury that harms women physically, emotionally, socially, and economically. A fistula is a hole in the birth canal caused by obstructed labour. A fistula can also develop during a violent rape. Women who experience fistula suffer constant incontinence, shame, social segregation, and health problems.

Fistula is preventable and can largely be avoided by eliminating child marriage, delaying the age of the first pregnancy, ending harmful traditional practices like FGM, and providing timely access to proper childbirth care. Most fistulas can be repaired with surgery; however, many poor urban women cannot even afford transportation to the hospital.

Pray with us for these women and girls and for organisations helping them to learn skills, find employment, learn of God's love for them, and enjoy life again.

PLEASE PRAY FOR ...

- 1 Project Hannah's *Healing Voice* team members (Becky, Flora, Wakshuma, Asrat, and Hana) as they write the English scripts and translate them into Amharic and Ari. This audio drama programme will teach women and their families about the causes and cures of fistula.
- 2 The two fistula facilities in the Addis Ababa area of Ethiopia: the Hamlin Fistula Hospital and the Desta Mender (Village of Joy) Centre. Pray for the doctors and nurses who work long hours caring for the many patients in need of care.
- 3 Family members of fistula sufferers to love and care for these women instead of making them suffer more by abandoning them or forcing them to live in shacks away from everyone else.
- 4 Women who have suffered from a fistula to find friends who will comfort them and help them receive surgery and emotional healing so they can become strong women of God.
- 5 Women who have had fistula repair surgery but are unable to return to their village. As a result they live, work, and learn in their new community of friends. Pray for the many fistula patients who are learning to be midwives and nurses.
- 6 Rural Ethiopian and Afghan women who have fistulas but have no physician to tell them why they are incontinent. Because the community does not understand that it is related to their difficult labour and childbirth, they sometimes declare sufferers to be witches or cursed. Pray for community leaders to learn and teach that there is healing surgery available in hospitals.
- 7 Producers of Project Hannah's *Women of Hope* programmes in more than 60 languages as they prepare programmes to teach women that they are precious to God and deserve to be treated with respect and to be loved and protected by their families.
- 8 Community leaders to do more to address the underlying medical and socioeconomic causes that claim the lives of women through pregnancy-related complications. Many more are injured or disabled with life-shattering, long-term conditions such as fistula.

9 Community leaders to protect girls from child marriages and early childbearing and promote education and skills training for girls so that they can live healthy, productive lives.

10 Desperately poor women who endure emotional and physical trauma as they suffer through days of labour because their babies cannot pass through small birth canals. An obstructed labour often causes the death of the baby, which sometimes must be cut up and delivered piece by piece. These mothers then develop fistulas from damaged internal tissue that didn't receive blood flow for days.

11 More hospitals and clinics to provide training for fistula surgery so that more women can be helped. Afghanistan and Pakistan each have only one hospital for the thousands of women who suffer from fistulas. Pakistan has 4,000-5,000 new fistula victims every year and nearly 30,000 deaths from pregnancy-related causes.

12 Girls who are forced to marry and then suffer the horrible physical pain of repeated rapes by their older husbands. This often results in fistulas, continuous bleeding, pregnancies (while their bodies are too small to carry or deliver a baby), and sometimes even death.

13 Communities to provide transportation for all expecting mothers to clinics to deliver their babies rather than transporting only those who have been in labour for days. Often it is too late to save the babies and prevent damage to the mothers' bodies.

14 More foundations to give financially to hospitals that perform fistula-repairing surgeries and for training more doctors, nurses, and midwives on safe delivery practices.

15 Communities to teach families about the dangers of child marriages and the need for good nutrition so that girls develop healthy bodies for future pregnancies.

16 More shelters and low-cost housing to become available for abandoned women trying to start over and provide a safe home for themselves and their children.

17 The government of Kenya as they try to teach communities about the dangers of FGM. Scores of Maasai women marched in support of FGM, saying it was part