

Pediatric Orthopedics in Pakistan: Present Scenario and Future Needs

Pediatric orthopedic surgery is a highly specialized and well developed sub-specialty in many countries. Unique characters of pediatric patients in terms of anatomy and physiology, specially related to growth of the child, from new born period to adolescence, poses challenges to the surgeons. Not only one faces host of congenital musculoskeletal anomalies but as technology advances, new modalities and methodologies add to armamentarium of treatment protocols. One needs to remain abreast with all such happenings. The adult orthopedic surgeons are already occupied with ever increasing load of trauma, infections tumors etc. Pediatric patients thus do not get due share and suffer.

In Pakistan pediatric orthopedic has not gained its due status. Few adult orthopedics surgeons do have some interest in congenital and acquired condition of the children but as such no dedicated unit exists. On the other hand some pediatric surgical departments in the country have dedicated pediatric orthopedic clinics, but they also fall short of needs of the children. Prof. Z.K. Kazi, a great name in orthopedics, remained a driving force in establishing pediatric orthopedics in the country specially in province of Sindh. Prof. Saghir Ahmed of National Institute of Child Health (NICH) Karachi, established one such clinic under his supervision in 1980. Since then it has grown at a fast pace. Similarly such clinics also established in Children Hospital of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences Islamabad, Children Hospital and Mayo Hospital Lahore.

The provision of comprehensive services in the field of pediatric orthopedics requires competence in pediatric as well as orthopedic surgery. For training of future surgeons a coordination is thus required so as to design suitable curriculum for teaching and training, encompassing both the disciplines. International liaison with developed pediatric orthopedic centers is mandatory where training slots can be arranged for surgeons from Pakistan. Such arrangement exists between individual consultants of NICH and KK Women and Children Hospital Singapore. One doctor has recently completed one year training from the same institute. Such coordinated efforts can go a long way in promoting pediatric orthopedics in Pakistan. The aspiring young doctors are encouraged to join this field. There is a tremendous work load with great satisfaction, when the job is done.

Dr. Farhat Masood Mirza

Department of Pediatric Surgery
National Institute of Child Health
Karachi.