

Development of orthopaedic facilities in Chitwan

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BACKGROUND

During evolution of surgical specialty, a surgeon used to treat wide variety of surgical illnesses including general surgery, orthopaedics, gynecology, etc. In the process of advancement of medical science, many sub-specialties of surgery and medicine have evolved. It is now almost impossible to acquire knowledge of all specialties and practice them in daily life although basic concept of medical science is a must to understand each medical specialty on the phenomenon. Therefore, medical practitioners started concentrating on single subject so that they can go to depth of medical to analyze the data and to take the most appropriate decision to offer the best treatment to their patients. Orthopaedic surgery can be considered as one of the sub specialization of surgical field. It is now independent field of surgery. Even general surgery is no longer existing in developed countries, it has also progressed in many fields such as gastrointestinal surgery, hepatobiliary surgery, cardio thoracic surgery, urology, etc.

Present Facilities

In developing country like Nepal, this process is slow. But under influence of neighbouring countries, our country can not deny such advancement in medical service; otherwise we will lag far behind the modernization of medical services.

In under-developed country like Nepal, training and research of specialties are almost dream projects although recently some institutions are trying to produce few of them but they have limited recognition outside Nepal. So, our country mainly depends on neighbouring countries like India, China Bangladesh and Pakistan for the training in special medical fields. Every year few medical doctors get the opportunity to be a specialist. In such scenario, not all Nepalese can expect to get specialist services, Few years back only the capital of Nepal (Kathmandu) had such services.

In peripheral city like Chitwan, medical specialist's services started recently. If we look back 8 years (i.e, 2002) from now, three health institutions were providing orthopaedic services in Chitwan viz, government general hospital, cancer hospital for oncology orthopaedics and a medical college. But due to inadequate infrastructure, they were providing insufficient service to orthopaedic patients. Many patients were referred to the capital for treatment.

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They lacked basic facilities like orthopaedic table, image intensifier and arthroscopy setup.

It was orthopaedic department of medical college that started providing modern services to orthopaedic patients with facility of C-arm image intensifier and arthroscopy in Chitwan. Due to location of Chitwan being at the centre of Nepal, connected with highways, many road traffic crash cases are in contact from all over the country on the way to Kathmandu. Many patients do not get early treatment on time and they miss valuable period of life and limb saving procedure. People did not have faith on hospitals in Chitwan and specialist did not have enough confidence to treat their orthopaedic patients. So, after primary treatment there was a tendency to be sent to hospitals in Kathmandu. Understanding this situation orthopaedic department was established in medical college with all modern facilities. This medical college was run by an Indian businessman. Initially, it did not have orthopaedic faculty and no independent orthopaedics ward. They had no interest in orthopaedic speciality and they pretended that running orthopaedic facilities was out of their financial scope. It took me some time to convince them to invest in orthopaedic set up. As soon as orthopaedic table, C-arm image intensifier and power drill came in hand we got separate OT table. We did plating using hand drill in those old days taking hours in tibia fixation. Now not only simple plating and K nail fixation but also many major surgeries like DHS, DCS, interlocking nailing of tibia, femur and humerus, Ilizarov ring fixation for complicated fracture of tibia and femur including deformity correction and bone

transport using callus distraction method and percutaneous pinning of supracondylar fracture became possible in trauma cases. In addition, pedicle screw fixation in spine injuries, decompression and bone grafting for Pott's spine and discectomy for lumbar as well as cervical PIVD through anterior approach were already performed. In congenital deformity, open reduction of hip in DDH, serial casting and PMR in CTEV, in knee arthroscopy, arthroscopic meniscectomy, and arthroscopy assisted ACL reconstruction are successfully performed. Implants were made available in the hospital premises.

Any trauma patient coming only for primary treatment started getting full treatment there. Many orthopaedic surgeries were performed. People came to know that orthopaedic services are available near their doorsteps. They stopped hurrying to Kathmandu for most of the cases. After knowing all these progress and seeing bright future in Chitwan, gradually many orthopaedic surgeons were attracted to Chitwan to launch their services. Some of them joined medical college, some of them have joined BPKM cancer hospital, and some came to Chitwan as full time private practitioner. Till date more than 14 orthopaedic surgeons are working in Chitwan. They started developing new set up of orthopaedic service. Now many small private hospitals have also good orthopaedics set ups such as image intensifier, arthroscope, etc.

Future Plan

Recently, establishment of Chitwan Medical College Orthopaedic Department has given new hope for

super specialized orthopaedic service. Our future plan is to train our orthopaedic surgeon in many super specialized orthopaedic fields so that patients coming to Chitwan will get more satisfactory treatment. Similarly, many orthopaedic surgeons in Chitwan are not satisfied with only post graduation; they are more enthusiastic to get super specialised fellowships.

CONCLUSION

As medical science facilitates sick people for better care, the orthopaedic field will certainly grow even in poor country like Nepal, if we have strong desire to offer the best treatment to orthopaedic patient to see smiles in their faces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is not an easy job to take speed in modernization of orthopaedic facilities in underprivileged circumstances but continuous effort will be needed to upgrade these services in Chitwan.