

Surgical specialties offer training for children's care in district hospitals

In a new initiative, in recognition of the global burden of disability due to surgical causes, the children's surgical specialities are organising a provider's course for children's surgical care in secondary hospitals (district level hospitals).

Most of the government flagship programs such as National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and Rastriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) have laid huge emphasis in reducing the burden of disabilities by focusing on prevention and early treatment of children's disease.

While their screening programs have been good, having identified millions of children who require treatment for surgical conditions, there is insufficient resources for children's surgical care in the referral centres. This is because of deficiency of trained manpower such as paediatric anaesthetists, surgeons and orthopaedic surgeons, in addition to a lack of paediatric ICU, nursing and other support facilities.

This new initiative aims to train health personnel (nurses, surgeons and anaesthetists) to provide surgical care for children, with a special focus on those under 10 years of age. It has been designed after assessing the needs at the secondary hospitals and holding consultations with providers.

The content of the course includes emergency management of children with surgical needs, common key conditions in orthopaedics affecting children such as knee deformity, clubfeet and infections, primary management of cerebral palsy, children's anaesthesia and nursing, which can be dealt with at district hospitals if appropriate resources are provided, in addition to safe surgical practices.



On the 2nd of June, 2017, sessions in Paediatric Orthopaedics and Anaesthesia were conducted in CMC Vellore Chittoor campus, in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, to expose the participants to management of children's surgical conditions in a district hospital setting. The Chittoor Campus in Andhra Pradesh has four state-of-the-art operation theatres and four world-class anaesthetists to run the set up.

More than 1,000 surgical procedures have been completed in these theatres in the last nine months. A pilot was carried out from the 1st to the 3rd June, led by Dr Sukria Nayak and Dr Vrisha Madhuri, with support from the faculty of the departments of Paediatric Orthopaedics, Surgery, Anaesthesia, Nursing and Critical Care from Christian Medical College Vellore and the Royal College of Surgeons, England.

The collaboration with Royal College is led by paediatric surgeon Richard Stewart, and monitored by the officials from Global Initiative for Children's Surgery (Kokila Lakhoo). Two government district hospitals from Karnataka and secondary mission hospitals from Oddanchatram, Tamil Nadu; Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh; and Tezpur, Assam were the first participants for this pilot course. This course represents a new direction in improving children's surgical care.