Pediatric surgery in India and Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons

I would like to start my write up with a reference from the book ‘Birth and Growth of Pediatric Surgery in India (1963-1987)’ written by late Dr. R. K. Gandhi. Dr. Gandhi described the development of a specialty in three phases:

Phase I: Phase of resentment and resistance
Phase II: Phase of realization and reconciliation
Phase III: Phase of recognition and reverence.

With the process of integration into composite hospital service, the specialty received its due recognition.

Our predecessors have established core values for Indian Association of Pediatric Surgeons (IAPS). Some of them are:

1. To promote and maintain the quality of education in pediatric surgery in India.
2. To raise the standards of the specialty by encouraging research in pediatric surgery.
3. To provide a forum for the dissemination of information with regard to pediatric surgery.
4. To encourage specialization in the field of pediatric surgery and the services of qualified pediatric surgeons must be made available to the rural people of India.

IAPS is the main forum of pediatric surgeons in India. Our scientific meetings are meant for exchange of ideas and knowledge transfer. In our meetings, we always give importance to papers on basic research (though very few in numbers), clinical research and new operative techniques. Some times the papers presented in our national conferences clearly show personal bias in data. Occasionally, no time is available for discussion of the paper. The presented scientific materials can be better assessed when they are published in peer-reviewed journals. It will be informative, if we can make a survey about the publication rate of scientific materials, which were presented in our last two or three national conferences. We must remember here that publication is the main mean of data dissemination in academic medicine.

As a teacher, I feel we must constantly refresh our knowledge to deliver the latest information to our residents, nurses, and also to the parents. In this connection, I must mention that the importance of recertification course must get its due recognition in our country.

As a scientific body, IAPS should take the leading role in forming the standard pediatric surgical practice guidelines. We must formulate protocols for evaluation of mortality, long term outcome. We must have a cell for maintenance of registers for common pediatric surgical diseases. At the same time, we must record our disease specific complications. This is essential for improving the quality of management. Our practice should be evidence based.

Regarding JIAPS, an integral part of IAPS, new publishing and computer technologies have remarkably improved the quality of our Journal. Electronic submission of articles has expedited the publication process. We have got immense clinical materials in India, and the editorial board may consider bringing out at least one issue on a particular disease per year. Editorial Board should also think to form guidelines for reporting clinical research in JIAPS. Clinical research is the foundation of clinical care. Primary aim of these guidelines is to help Indian Pediatric Surgeons to interpret the relevance of clinical research findings to their own practice.

Editorial articles ‘Research in Pediatric Surgery: who should light the flame’ by Dr. D. K. Gupta and ‘Research in Pediatric Surgery in India: Areas of Interest’ by Dr. G. R. Prasad (JIAPS – July-Sept, 2006, vol. 11, Issue 3) are very informative and thought provoking. Knowledge of basic research is a must for all of us. Inclusion of basic research in pediatric surgery syllabus is a good idea. It will be definitely helpful for a resident pursuing for an academic career. But a resident who is aiming for a complete clinical career, how much significance basic research will have in Indian scenario? Only time will answer this question.

Pediatric surgery in India is passing through the Phase-III as described by Dr. R. K. Gandhi. With united efforts of all of us, I am sure, we will be able to provide best possible services to our neonates, infants, and children.

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