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EDITORIAL

ORTHOPEDECS IN ETHIOPIA

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The articles in this special issue were able to see the light of publication through the fund from the Government of Ethiopia, Ministry of Innovation and Technology- MInT (3rd round National Grant).

This EMJ volume came out at ever challenging times on us: COVID-19 and conflict at law enforcement. Both of these affected our orthopedic Surgeons and residents a lot: In the Orthopedic Department at AAU in the last 6 months (June-November,2020) there were 51 Covid positives. Mostly residents and patients were affected. In the five months semi-lock down and state of emergency, we had minimum number of traffic injuries and less flow of patients. So, we got some spare time to write these articles collected in this special edition.

In the past few years, Ethiopian Orthopedics has shown tremendous growth: The number of Orthopedic surgeons graduated from the trainings in the country is around 200 (163 graduated from Addis Ababa University (AAU) since 1987, 18 from St. Paul Millennium Medical School since 2015, 16 from Bahir Dar University (BDU) since 2015 and 8 from Mekelle since 2016). Gondar University started residency last year and Hawassa University will start this year. There are some 10 specialists who were trained abroad and some 10 expatriates. The Number of residents specializing has dramatically increased and joining this training became very competitive over the years: 75 in AAU, 40 each in St. Paul and BDU, 30 in Mekelle and 2 in Gondar University (GU). Orthopedic Trauma Sub-specialty is given only in the “Mother” Department at AAU and three fellows are currently in training. In addition to realizing the establishments of all Orthopedic Departments in Ethiopia using its curriculum and experience, this Department also gave birth to ESOT (Ethiopian Society of Orthopedics & Traumatology) (Registered on Jan 2, 2004).

Modern orthopedic practice in a large developing country of over 115 million inhabitants with high incidence of road traffic injuries (RTI) deep-rooted traditional bone setter (“Wogesha”) practice is very much demanding. Thanks to long-term international partners/collaborators like Surgical Implants Generation Network (SIGN), Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Osteosynthesefragen (AO), Australian Doctors for Africa (ADFA), Seattle Alliance Overseas (SAO), World Orthopedic Concern (WOC), etc, our practice, training and research efforts formed a formidable front to advance Ethiopian Orthopedics. The number of patients opting for new technologies & new procedures has also increased. But in all aspects, long way to go! A lot of hard work and improvement, especially ensuring availability of implants, instruments and orthopedic tools by manufacturing them in the country, is an assignment waiting.

Again, November was tough because of the recent low enforcement conflicts going on in the Northern part of our country. It made most of our member Surgeons very busy, some deployed to the fronts. With mixed spirits in both situations, we managed to prepare this volume.

In this Volume, we tried to cover wide range of orthopedic conditions in Ethiopia: Traumatic, Infectious, Degenerative and Neoplastic musculoskeletal diseases in both genders. Soft tissue and bone issues are addressed for both pediatric and adult populations we handle. Scientific digital rating of permanent disability is the main feature of this research project, funded by Ministry of Science & Technology-MInT (the then MoST). Of course, we also have an article related to COVID-19.

This is a project finalized in 4 years. Allow me to thank the three Minsters involved: H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed (the then Minster of MoST) for accepting my concept note to design and develop a software that rates permanent physical disability; H.E. Dr. Er. Getahun Mekuria (then Minster of MoST) for granting the fund and H.E. Dr. Abraham Belay current Minster of Innovation and Technology-MInT. Now, we have developed a comprehensive software that rates permanent physical disability and awards a percentage.

I thank my project team and all the contributors. I thank EMJ for considering our articles for publication. Enjoy reading the Articles.

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