Foot and Ankle Surgery in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

As Malaysia modernized with time, the specialty of foot and ankle surgery became more relevant and has gained tremendous interest among trainees and practicing orthopedic surgeons. This commentary gives a brief view of the status of foot and ankle surgery in Malaysia.

Keywords: Development of foot and ankle surgery, Foot and ankle surgery, Malaysian Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society.

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Malaysian Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society (MOFAS) was born on February 3, 2012, unifying the increasing number of foot and ankle surgeons in Malaysia. This gave the orthopedic surgeons of Malaysia a formal platform to expand foot and ankle surgery as a subspecialty within the borders of the country, and over time we could be represented at the international level. The evolution of the society and the induction of members over the last 8 years has nurtured ties with other societies in the region, specifically Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, China, and India.

Education focused on foot and ankle issues was also initiated in conjunction with the Ministry of Health of Malaysia; over time a 4-year foot and ankle fellowship program was established. This centralized and standardized the training in foot/ankle for Malaysia trainees to specific hospitals at the local level, with a 6-month overseas exposure before the exit exams. At the current time, MOFAS is represented by expert examiners at the fellowship examinations. Currently, foot and ankle services are only available in some university hospitals, large government institutions, and established private hospitals. They are mainly in the cities of Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Kuantan. As the specialty increases in popularity, it would be our goal to have a foot and ankle service at every large state general hospital (Fig. 1).

Annually, the society is now conducting a foot and ankle course for trainees, along with a scientific meeting focused on this subspecialty, to nurture additional interest among orthopedic surgeons, who could develop an interest in this area. Members

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of MOFAS have also been actively involved in scientific meetings throughout the world.

Some of the members of MOFAS are active faculty members for AOTrauma. They have been involved extensively in the Principles and Advance Fracture Management Course for residents in Malaysia and the Asia Pacific region. Some have also been privileged to become Regional Faculty for the Foot and Ankle Trauma and Lower limb Masters Courses in Indonesia, China, Korea, Thailand, and India. We have also been honored by representation as faculty members at the international AOTrauma Davos and Madrid courses in Switzerland and Spain, respectively. We conducted the first AOTrauma Foot and Ankle Course in Malaysia in 2011 followed by a cadaveric version of the course in 2018. This has exposed the Malaysian surgeons to renowned international faculty from around the world (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1: Malaysian Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society (MOFAS) annual meeting at the Malaysian Orthopaedic Association (MOA) subspecialty congress. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia October 2018

Fig. 2: AOTrauma Masters Course–Foot and Ankle with Anatomical Specimens, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2018

Fig. 3: Foot and Ankle Workshops conducted by MOFAS, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, February 2020

The majority of foot-related surgeries are related to trauma. This is reflected in the country being heavily invested in developing infrastructure. With the ever-growing education within the public, people are starting to appreciate the

complexities related to the foot. The internet has both increase information and leads to more confusion over foot and ankle disorders. Deformity correction, post-traumatic reconstruction, chronic neglected pediatric conditions, and traumatic soft tissue repairs are also growing in popularity as the needs of the population become more complex.

Malaysian Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society has very close ties with surgeons within the region, e.g., Singapore, India, Thailand, Korea, China, Australia, and Japan. The society is slowly maturing with an increasing number of new trainees blossoming into the fellowship program. This comradery benefits us in shared expertise of knowledge and techniques (Fig. 3).

As we mature, MOFAS has editorial representation in the *Journal of Foot and Ankle Surgery Asia Pacific*. Members have contributed by writing chapters to books published in the region and the world-acclaimed *AOTrauma Manual of Fracture Fixation: Foot and Ankle*. This has allowed us to contribute to the growing knowledge base in foot and ankle surgery.

Malaysian Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society will face many challenges in the form of insurance regulatory understanding, education, training of residents and subspecialists for Malaysia, and the increasing support from industrial partners. We shall walk this path and hold hands with our fellow societies in the region for guidance and a bright future ahead.