

Overview of The Current Situation of Orthopedics Traumatology in Africa

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The evolution of Orthopaedics and Traumatology in Africa followed the same path than the continent's history. Countries like South Africa and those from the Maghreb region are progressively standing out from the rest, as a result of their past. In these countries, the specialty is well structured and progresses regularly.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the specialty had to divest itself of the old methods used by the colonizer and create a path towards a correct patient care. The first step was to train orthopaedics and traumatology surgeons as well as physical doctors in several countries through international cooperation. The next step was the establishment of adequate facilities to train specialists locally. Very few African medical schools have organized local trainings for specialists, so far. Additionally, regular internships abroad have still been very limited.

Scientific societies exist in some localities. There is even a struggling African scientific society. Specialized scientific journals are non-existent in most African states, with the exception of North Africa, South Africa and Nigeria. The journal created by Cameroon and Senegal is not recognized by the African academic authorities. This rather unfavorable relationship increase notably the serious challenge faced by the majority of the populations in need of medical care. Furthermore, lack of solvency, medicalization of first aid, and administrative management of facilities constitute significant obstacles to the flourishing of the specialty. Prevention and introduction of modern treatment techniques have reduced the impact of certain conditions on the locomotor system such as tuberculosis, acute poliomyelitis, leprosy, sickle cell anemia, mycetomic diseases, osteomyelitis and so on ...

Apart from these tropical diseases, the pathology remains identical to that encountered elsewhere. Their management tends to standardize with international norms, and the results obtained are encouraging.

To summarize, if Africa is preparing, from the technical point of view, to take care of its populations suffering from affections of the musculoskeletal system, resources are particularly deficient. So, actors from all levels of responsibility should increase their efforts to contribute efficiently to the flourishing of the specialty.

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