

Editorial

The Association of Paediatric Surgeons of Pakistan (APSP): A platform for improving pediatric surgical services in Pakistan

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It is an honor to write a few words for the newly launched journal of The Association of Paediatric Surgeons of Pakistan (APSP), the "Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Surgery", which will replace the current journal "APSP Journal of Case Reports". Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Surgery will accept all kinds of relevant, genuine, and quality research articles for publication. The journal has got eminent national and international pediatric surgeons on its editorial/advisory board. I hope that the dedication and commitment of its editorial team will overcome all hurdles and will soon get it recognized at national and international levels.

The inclusion of the term "adolescent" which is particularly unique to this journal signifies an important purpose. Adolescence is an unmarked boundary between childhood and adulthood and is thus a neglected age group in surgical research journals from both sides. The term "adolescent" will widen the scope of the journal and will attract adult surgeons to submit relevant research work pertaining to this age group and will bridge the gap between two mother specialties of relevant age groups.

Pakistan is a developing country with a population of 220 million with children constituting 43 % (86 million) of the total.[1] The journey of Pediatric Surgery as a separate specialty began in the early 1960s from the USA.[2] The dedication and efforts of the worthy pioneers of Pediatric Surgery kept its growth and development at a constant pace.

Currently, there are about 200 pediatric surgeons in Pakistan working throughout the country but proper pediatric surgical services are restricted to major cities only. Like other developing countries, there is an obvious disparity between the logistic resources, manpower, and burden of disease in Pakistan in this field. The ratio of pediatric surgeons to the population in Pakistan is 0.625/million as compared to 1-4 or even 29.3/million populations in the other parts of the world.[3,4] Similarly, we also lack purpose-oriented infrastructure, critical care, and anesthesia facilities for children with surgical conditions.

With changing global standards of health care, surgery (including Pediatric Surgery) has been declared as an important part of Essential Health Services and Universal Health Coverage.[5-7] Owing to the recognition of its importance globally, it is high time to improve pediatric surgical services in Pakistan. APSP is an official representation of pediatric surgeons in Pakistan. Its aims and objectives are improving pediatric surgical services and enhancing the capacity of the pediatric surgeons for timely and effective care of the patients, through education, skill development, research promotion, and outreach to the periphery. To accomplish its goals, the association holds regular meetings, conferences, seminars, and workshops. It has productive ties with friend associations of the world for the exchange of ideas and experiences. APSP also interacts with health policymakers at national and provincial levels to enhance the capacity of Pediatric Surgery in terms of human resources and infrastructure.

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The APSP aims to include pediatric surgery in the undergraduate curriculum. Realization of this idea will be a breakthrough in the development of pediatric surgery in Pakistan because,

1. There will be more employment opportunities for pediatric surgeons
2. Adequate familiarity and exposure of medical students will attract more doctors to pursue a career in pediatric surgery
3. More public awareness will earn the specialty its due recognition among other developed specialties and ensure bright prospects for future surgeons

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To achieve this goal, we need to make collective, organized, and purpose-oriented efforts under the umbrella of APSP. Let's play the role on our part for a better and brighter pediatric surgery both for patients and the professionals to come. Let's join hands with each other to make things possible for better care of children's surgery and children's surgical workforce in Pakistan with the collaboration of National and International sister organizations.

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