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Tajuk : Most cases of club foot can be treated without surgery – Orthopaedic specialist

Most cases of club foot can be treated without surgery — Orthopaedic specialist

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KUCHING: Most cases of club foot, a common form of congenital deformity of the foot, can be treated without surgery.

Congenital club foot or talipes equinovarus makes up most of the 200 cases of congenital deformities seen by Prof Dr Ahmad Hata Rasit since he commenced his field of specialty at Sarawak General Hospital (SGH) in 2001.

He is currently a Professor in Orthopaedic at Unimas Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Drawing from his 15 years of experience, he delivered his inaugural lecture yesterday on 'Congenital Limb Deformity: Replace, Repair or Remove' at Tun Abang Salahuddin Islamic Centre (Pitas) at Unimas.

When speaking to reporters

later, Dr Ahmad Hata said only 10 per cent of the club foot cases he had seen required surgery and the remaining cases could be treated with serial manipulation and weekly casting to correct deformities.

"The objective of treatment is to repair the deformity and retain flexibility and strength of the foot. The foot must be able to stand and walk on a normal load-bearing area of the foot," he said.

Dr Ahmad Hata, who still lends assistance to SGH, revealed that through their studies, they found that club foot happens to more Malays than Chinese.

"There's also very few Ibans but this is perhaps because they don't seek treatment," he said, adding that financial concerns is the top reason some parents are reluctant to bring their children in.

He still helps out at SGH when necessary due to the lack of orthopaedic specialists.

"Recently we trained Unimas medical officers to be more familiar with orthopaedic, and they will be training in every government hospital in Sarawak so they can reach the community easily. Parents with children with these conditions can go to any government hospital and from there, can get referred to SGH."

He added that they hope to bring their training to Sibul, Miri and Bintulu by mid-year.

In his lecture, Dr Ahmad Hata said the aim of treating limb deformity is to give the patient a better quality of life. Depending on the type of deformity, it may be necessary to perform a replacement, repair or removal, he added.

He said they need to consider several factors before treatment,

namely the severity of the deformity, the parents and family's beliefs, the socio-economic status of the family, and the child's overall wellbeing.

"Congenital limb deformity is a rare disease and can have multiple causes," he said, after explaining the different types of deformities.

Despite the topic of the lecture, Dr Ahmad Hata presented it in a very accessible manner, allowing the laymen in his audience to follow.

The audience also included his family members and a former patient.

Also present were Medicine and Health Sciences Faculty deputy dean (Postgraduate and Research) Prof Dr Lela Su-ut, Unimas vice chancellor Prof Dato Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi.

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