

History of the Orthopaedic Specialty in Singapore

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Abstract

The Orthopaedic specialty service in Singapore began in 1952 with the appointment of J A P Cameron to the chair of Orthopaedics at the University of Malaya and the simultaneous establishment of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the General Hospital, Singapore. A second department — a government department of orthopaedic surgery was established in 1959, under the headship of Mr D W C Gawne also at the General Hospital, Singapore to cater to the increasing workload. Although orthopaedic services were already available at Alexandra Hospital, Tan Tock Seng Hospital and Toa Payoh Hospital from as early as 1974, the formal establishment of a Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in these hospitals took place only in 1977. The pioneering local orthopaedic surgeons — Mr W G S Fung, Mr K H Yeoh, and Mr V K Pillay — joined the orthopaedic service in 1961. In 1967, Prof Pillay and Mr Fung took the leadership role at the University Orthopaedic Department and Government Orthopaedic Department, General Hospital, Singapore, respectively. Subspecialty services in orthopaedic surgery began in the late 1970s, and currently, at least 7 subspecialties have developed to divisional status at one or more hospitals. In 2001, there were 92 registered Orthopaedic specialists and just over a third were in private practice.

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