



Paediatric orthopaedics : from reassuring parents to the most complex issues

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The word “orthopaedics” comes from the Greek : ορθός, orthos meaning straight or right and παιδίς, παιδός, pais, paidos meaning child. The invention of the word “orthopaedics” was made in 1741 by Nicolas Andry (1). Nicolas Andry was a French medical doctor (Lyon 1658-Paris 1742) who wrote the famous book “L’orthopédie”, (“Orthopaedia or the art of correcting and preventing deformities in children”) in 1741 (figure 1). This book was received with great success in Paris and was successively published in Brussels (1742), translated into English in London (1743) and finally translated in German in Berlin in 1745. One of the engravings of his book, the crooked tree (figure 1) has become the symbol of numerous orthopaedic societies around the world.

In its origin, orthopaedics was exclusively paediatric and “paediatric orthopaedics” seems to have been a pleonasm. Today orthopaedics involves and implies more treatment of adults than children. This change in the meaning of the word/discipline occurred during (and perhaps because of) the First World War.

After this historical tour let us get back to the heart of this issue.

A journal issue dedicated to paediatrics is far from being a textbook unlike a textbook which would be organised into neat progressive sections – perhaps less derogatory to write ... It is difficult to organise a paediatric journal in the form of a textbook when the subjects are numerous, various and somewhat heterogeneous.

Indeed a paediatric orthopaedic surgeon is typically dealing with worried parents about common “problems” such as are reflected in articles about flatfeet and general trauma one minute and then with the most unusual, rare, dangerous, controversial. This is one of the biggest challenges of our sub-specialty. Reflecting this, a few articles in this issue deal with trauma related to pathological fractures (tumours), abnormal bones (osteoporosis) and a case report on a rare cervical spine injury in a toddler !

Next a few articles cover the specific paediatric pathologies like congenital hip dislocation and their late sequelae, clubfeet, Perthes disease, leg length discrepancy and lower limb angular deformities.

A few spine conditions are approached with some “new” and somewhat controversial methods like the use of the “spinecor brace”, the growth in friendly instrumentation and even some really controversial and “please don’t try this at home” like the article on high-grade spondylolisthesis.

Finally one more difficult subject is evoked: dealing with benign or malignant tumours of growing bones.

REFERENCE

1. **Kohler R. Nicolas Andry de Bois-Regard** (Lyon 1658-Paris 1742) : the inventor of the word "orthopaedics" and the father of parasitology. *J Child Orthop.* 2010 ; 4(4) : 349-55.

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L'ORTHOPÉDIE

OU

L'ART

DE PREVENIR ET DE CORRIGER
DANS LES ENFANS
LES DIFFORMITÉS DU CORPS:

LE TOUT PAR DES MOYENS A LA PORTEE
des Peres & des Meres, & de toutes les
Personnes qui ont des Enfans à élever.

PAR M. ANDRY, CONSEILLER DU ROY,
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Docteur-Regent, & ancien Doyen de la Faculté de
Médecine de Paris, &c.

Avec Figures.

TOME SECOND.



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A PARIS, RUE SAINT JACQUES:

Chez } La Veuve ALIX, au-dessus de la rue des
Noyers, au Griffon.
LAMBERT & DURAND, à la Sagesse;
& à Saint Landry.

M. DCC. XLI.

AVEC APPROBATIONS ET PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

