

Elective Objectives

**What are the prevalent orthopaedic conditions in Kerala? How do they differ from the UK?**

Globally musculoskeletal disease makes up 37% of disease according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Unfortunately due to lack of data in a developing area like India accurate figures have yet to be documented. Despite India's progressive economy and industry their prevalence of musculoskeletal conditions is high.

The kind of orthopaedic condition prevalent in India are similar to the UK with bone fractures and osteoarthritis being among the most frequent.

Musculoskeletal disorders are particularly common in work place environments particularly in strenuous tasks. There are higher incidences in the firework industry compared to the match industry and other industries. However workers tend to only seek medical help when their condition is severe so milder problems are likely to be more prevalent but under-reported.

**Describe the orthopaedic service provided in Kerala? How does it differ from the UK?**

Originally traditional Ayurvedic Massage Therapy was used to treat many musculoskeletal conditions. Now medical institutions specializing in modern medicine have developed considerably providing high standards of Orthopaedic treatment and surgery. Its infrastructure and technology is almost on par with UK, USA and Europe. Along with this they follow international standards of clinical care, safe environment, medication safety, respect for rights and privacy, international infection control standards.

The orthopaedic surgeons in India are highly qualified, having trained and worked in some of the best centres in England, USA & Europe.

There are significant cost differences in India when it comes to Orthopaedic surgery. India is not only cheaper but the waiting time is almost zero. This is due to the outburst of the private sector which is comprised of hospitals and clinics with the latest technology and best practitioners.

It is because of this that patients from all over India come to Kerala if they have any musculoskeletal concerns.

Orthopaedic treatments involve the diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions affecting the skeletal system. Disorders of the bones and joints, and conditions of the spine are treated at Orthopaedic Centres in Kerala. Orthopaedic surgery such as hip replacement, knee replacement and Spinal surgery and treatment of fractures by Ilizarov techniques are offered by hospitals providing Orthopaedic treatment in India.

With fully-equipped operation theatres, trained Orthopaedic care teams and the back-up support of labs and blood banks, hospitals in Kerala focus on providing complete medical care solutions. Orthopaedic treatment in Kerala is one of the specialized branches of medicine that has become a sought after medical tourism option.

Some of the hospitals that offer Orthopaedic treatment in Kerala are:

- Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Science, Trivandrum
- Atingal Multispeciality Hospital, Trivandrum
- Specialist's Hospital, Ernakulam
- Champakara Multispeciality Hospital
- Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre, Ernakulam

Again the Orthopaedic services in UK are of a very high standard offering the same kinds of services.

### **Discuss the major medical problem(s) in Kerala? How do they differ from the UK?**

Despite, low mortality due to better health care development, the morbidity (those suffering from diseases) both from urban and rural Kerala is high in Kerala compared to other Indian states especially the chronic illnesses.

The morbidity analysis of Kerala reveals that the attack of acute diarrhoeal diseases, measles, pneumonia, pulmonary tuberculosis, dengue fever etc is the major diseases in the state. The attack and death of a mammoth of population due to vital illness - chikungunya compelled the state to declare a health package to the state to liberate its people from this vital illness. Moreover, many epidemics that were supposed to be eliminated from Kerala are staging a comeback. Higher prevalence of mental health problems including higher suicide rates, health problems and death due to road traffic accidents and other traumas are worth mentioning in this regard.

Ageing is another area of concern of Kerala health that accounts for hike in morbidity. As life expectancy increases there is high incidence of disease associated with aging and life style diseases. Sedentary life styles, lack of physical activities and obesity increases the risk of chronic and life style diseases.

### **Describe communication with patients in Kerala? How do they differ from the UK?**

Kerala compared to other states in India is one if not the most educated, having a 100% literacy rates. During my placement I found a majority of them spoke English very well and understood what I was saying especially if I spoke slower and in simpler sentences. But there

were still challenging patients which required using the nurse as an interpreter. This made clinical examinations of patient very arduous as a lot of the examination involves giving instructions to patient. This kind of situation came across much less frequently in the UK placements. These difficulties encouraged me to be more creative in how I tried to communicate instructions to the patient such as through body language and writing and drawing on the paper. If my placement had been longer, however, I would have had more time to learn some essential phrases to communicate with the patient(s).