

Latest in knee surgery

Pinu Haq has led a healthy, productive life. Having retired ten years ago as a communications consultant, she now leads a simpler life, spending time with family and her grandchildren. However, it's not an all-out happy tale for Haq, and it rarely is for people her age. Plagued with various age related complications, she is now most troubled by orthopedic problems.

It is predicted that by the mid-2020s Bangladesh will have a significant geriatric population suffering from various age related ailments. To cater to this growing need the medical sector of the country will have to make tremendous amends to be at par with the advanced nations.

Like Pinu Haq, many people her age suffer from osteoarthritis, arthritis and osteoporosis – ailments that can be extremely painful. Men, who have crossed their middle ages or are at the threshold of mid-ages, too are prone to these health problems. An aching joint, as it seems, is a common complaint in every household; if neglected these bone diseases can cause more harm than one can possibly imagine, but through timely intervention these can easily be treated with medication and therapy.

Many people of Bangladesh opt for medical tourism in advanced countries after suffering from orthopedic problems and the Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital is one of the most popular destinations for such patients.

Recently, new surgical advances have been made at the hospital, which offers safer and less invasive approach to mid-stage osteoarthritis.

The hospital's new MAKOplasty Partial Knee Re-surfacing Procedure may just be the answer to your prayers. This procedure uses the RIO Robotic Arm Interactive Orthopedic System, the first of its kind offered in Singapore.

MAKOplasty Partial Knee Re-surfacing Procedure is a surgical treatment designed to relieve pain in the knee caused by the wear and tear of joint cartilage. The procedure is done using a robotic arm, which lets surgeons treat only the damaged part of the knee. The precise nature of the procedure means healthy bone and ligaments surrounding the damaged area are spared. It is best suited for adults suffering knee pain from osteoarthritis in one of the three knee compartments.

The procedure has been successfully performed on 10 patients at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital. Previously, similar surgeries were highly difficult to perform as surgeons were required to cut the diseased portion of their patient's bone and fit the implant accurately, free hand. With MAKOplasty Partial Knee Resurfacing, the RIO Robotic Arm Interactive Orthopedic System provides surgeons with real-time visual, tactile, and auditory feedback during surgery to facilitate optimal joint resurfacing and implant positioning.

"The robotic tool enables the surgeon to see the knee in a three dimensional plane, which was not available using manual conventional techniques," says Dr Jeffrey Chew, Orthopedic Surgeon at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital. "With robotic tool, intu-

itively, there would be a lot less margin for error as the surgery is practically planned pre operatively and it is just a matter of executing the procedure."

This robotic arm assisted procedure results in a more natural knee motion post surgery, increases the life expectancy of the implant, minimises scarring due to a smaller incision and promotes a more rapid recovery as well as a shorter hospital stay compared to traditional knee replacement surgery. The procedure can also be performed on an outpatient basis.


With 20 years' experience in this field, Dr Jeffrey Chew the Orthopedic Surgeon at Mount Elizabeth Hospital specialises in arthritis, hip and knee joint replacements and sports injuries.

Research is an area of interest for Dr Chew, and that has led to the numerous awards he has won, including the Russell Hibbs Award from the Scoliosis Research Society.

In addition, together with Johnson and Johnson Medical, Dr Chew helped co-design the PFC Sigma RPF High Flex Knee prosthesis. Especially designed for the Asian population, the prosthesis allows for better range of knee flexion and higher stability. His current research interests are in patella designs and tracking as well as cartilage transplantation for arthritis.

For patients like Pinu Haq and others like her now have a better chance of leading a good life even after having an alignment which would have required knee replacement surgeries. There, as it seems, is light at the end of the tunnel.

If you are seeking appointments for such specialised treatment, there are two patient assistance centres in Bangladesh, one in Chittagong and one in Dhaka to facilitate in seeking treatments. E-mail dhaka@parkwayhealth.net for further details. – LS Desk




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