

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

SURGERY IN RURAL NEPAL

Dear Editor,

The article Surgery in Rural Nepal, published recently in your journal, has shown the practice pattern of surgery in a district hospital of Nepal.¹ The article is able to show the importance of MDGPs in rural surgical cases; either emergency or elective. Providing minor surgery gives GPs the opportunity to provide quality service to patients in a convenient, familiar setting. In rural areas, where quacks are performing different medical services, the role of MDGPs can not be underestimated and neglected. There is no doubt that GPs can be considered alternative to surgical specialists in a country like ours due to lack of surgical specialists.

The authors have discussed different types of surgeries performed by GPs and concluded that GPs can effectively manage the surgical cases in limited resources. I think it is very difficult to quote this without seeing the success rate of those surgeries performed in those situations. The decision of GP regarding referral or the performing the procedure depends on different factors like availability of specialist nearby, sex of the GP and socioeconomic status of the patient.² Performing the operations is not an indication of effective management of surgical cases. Survival after the surgery indicates the success and effectiveness of those surgeries and it also answers the question whether a particular group of physician should be allowed to perform that procedure or not.³ The authors here have neither studied about the success of those surgeries nor they have taken care of the referrals. The study does not discuss about the factors that have influenced the decision of GPs to operate. Studies have shown that some of the procedures like appendectomy are

among the safe procedures as indicated by very low death (0.02%) rate and can be carried easily in the rural setting and by the GPs or by the specialists.⁴ Also there are some conditions in which referral is needed. To maintain the surgical standards in rural part and for effective management of surgical cases, surgically and appropriately trained GPs are recommended.^{5,6} In case of any difficulties and doubt, the cases should be referred to higher centers.

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