

Has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the practice of Orthopedics and Traumatology?

Covid-19 pandemisi, Ortopedi ve Travmatoloji pratiğini etkiledi mi?

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Dear Editor;

The covid-19 pandemic has not only affected infectious or chest disease clinics but also all services and nearly all researchers [1]. To search the rate of affection through orthopedic surgeons in Turkey, we conducted a survey virtually via Turk-Ortopod mailing group. Among all group members, 300 participated in our survey. We want to share our interesting results to point out that the covid-19 pandemic had major changes in many aspects of orthopedic practice like other countries.

Most of the participants were young (72% between 25-44 years old) specialists (48,8%) or residents (20,4%) actively working in daily duties, 60% in training or university hospitals at least for 10 years (45,8% 5-15 years), 83.7% with no chronic comorbidity. 88.3% of these facilities also served covid-19 infected patients, so 64.4% were working in units with risk of covid-19 transmission like emergency departments. Most were living with

family members (57% 2-3, 24% 4), and 89% were concerned about the disease being transmitted to the home, while 54% were concerned about self-infection. 26.2% thought there were deficiencies in protective equipment and precautions, 48.7% found it nearly sufficient as advised [2]. So 59.2% wanted to stay away from their home during this period, but only 26.5% had other places to stay. Furthermore 34.7% worried about the risk of income-loss, 41.7% concerned about its impact on social life, as 45.3% experienced changes in their work patterns; 39.1% served only control patients, 86.3% performed only emergent operations, while 39.9% had had nearly 10 elective patients on their waiting lists. Not only psychosocial health of orthopedic surgeons [3], but this situation also negatively impacted waiting patients [4]. However, 70.8% reported that they would operate a covid-19 infected patient only if urgent and necessary precautions were taken. The use of guiding principles for resuming elective orthopedic surgery seems to be safe [5]. Thus patient selection and

surgical timing has been advised to categorize in certain groups by Turkish Society of Orthopaedics and Traumatology [6]. But nevertheless surgeon decides the timing on his own experience [7].

On the other hand, 62.8% found their knowledge about the covid-19 partially sufficient, because 54.2% received their information from scientific sources, 30.8% from social media. While 28.3% thought it was a serious problem, 33.7% believed it needed much more attention. 59.1% believed that the national orthopedic specialty association had sufficient information and guidance through the pandemic period. When this survey was conducted, 46.8% of participants believed they would return to their normal routine within 2 to 5 months. The pandemic had also an effect on the delivery of education, with face to face teaching being replaced by webinar-based teaching. Nevertheless Turkish residents had psychological distress [8], and concerns about their training program, like their colleagues worldwide.

We want to mention that many orthopedic surgeons are concerned about the current situation with a lot of uncertainty, and this impacted the orthopedic surgical practice during this pandemic [9]. Working under directions of the World Health Organization and national associations will provide a safe working environment for orthopedic surgeons till the pandemic ends [10].

With our best regards.

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