

More experts needed for new joint surgeries

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NEW DELHI: The latest technological advances and developments in keyhole and minimally invasive joint surgeries have made life easier for doctors. But there is a lack of surgeons trained to perform such operations in the country.

The new frontiers in joint replacements and related procedures include keyhole surgeries in joint pathology for sports people, joint replacement surgeries by navigation for precision and minimally invasive joint replacement surgery.

“These are all modifications of the existing systems but there are very few surgeons available in India who can conduct these surgeries with precision,” said Dr Pushpinder Singh Bajaj, president, International Society for Knowledge for Surgeons on Arthroscopy and Arthroplasty (ISKSAA).

“These are expensive surgeries but with more and more surgeons getting exposed to and trained in these procedures, the cost is bound to come down. In India, even today these procedures cost a fraction of what they do in the West,” he added.

In the government sector as well, there are very few places where such surgeries are conducted. Sports Injury Centre at Safdurjung hospital in Delhi is one such place which is a pioneer in the field of latest developments in joint surgeries.

“Autologous Chondrocyte implantation for a defect or hole in the cartilage is one of the latest developments in joint surgeries. In this treatment, normal cells of a healthy cartilage is taken out and sent to the laboratory for chondrocyte culture. After 6-9 months, it becomes a normal cartilage and the defect is filled with it,” said Dr Deepak Chaudhary,

director, Sports Injury Centre. “The process of sending the cells to the laboratory and growth of the cells costs around ₹2 lakh, with the other procedures related to the implantation being free in a government set up. In a private hospital, the whole treatment would cost around ₹3-4 lakh,” said Dr Chaudhury.

By reducing three-weeks recovery time to just three days, the keyhole technique of surgery along with minimally invasive methods of operating has revolutionized joint replacement and several sports-related injuries, such as strained and cramped muscle, sprained ankles, tennis elbow, lower back pain, painful heels and knees, etc. More than 800 doctors were exposed to the latest developments in keyhole and minimally invasive joint surgeries during the 40 live surgeries that were performed at the ISKSAA's conference held last week.