

Pediatric Surgery in Ankara

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Ankara has witnessed the rapid progress of pediatric surgery in Turkey. Traditionally children in this country were operated by surgeons who would not confine themselves to this age group. In 1957 Hacettepe Children's Hospital was established as the first children's hospital of Ankara. The first general surgeon assigned to the hospital was Dr. Yüksel Bozer, who is presently the Rector of the Hacettepe University and is involved in cardiothoracic surgery. He had spent four months at the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children before arriving at Hacettepe.

In the April of 1958 Mr. Eckstein began working at the Hacettepe Children's Hospital. The age of surgeons devoted to treating children in Ankara begins with Herbert Eckstein. He did so much in initiating the concept of pediatric surgery. His outstanding efforts and extraordinary knowledge was soon acknowledged by the medical community. He was primarily interested in the surgery of the urinary system anomalies and urolithiasis. Additionally he performed various orthopedic operations and the first bronchoscopies in children. During his time Mr. David Waterstone and Mr. (later Sir) David Innes Williams visited Hacettepe and operated with him.

Dr. Mehmet Tekdoğan and Dr. Aydın Aytaç joined the surgical staff in 1959. They were both primarily involved in the treatment of cardiovascular anomalies. After completing my pediatric surgical training at the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital, I returned to Ankara in 1964 as the first formally trained and certified pediatric surgeon.

The Department of Pediatric Surgery whose first residents were of general surgical origin graduated its own trainees in the year 1969. Hacettepe also inspired the foundation of departments at several universities around the country. This department has led the way to the establishment of the Turkish Association of Pediatric Surgeons and initiated its collaboration with the European Union of Pediatric Surgical Associations (EUPSA) and the World Federation of Associations of Pediatric Surgeons (WOFAPS). In the department itself there are newborn and children's surgical clinics with 25 and 32 beds respectively, and annually an average of 1300 outpatient and 850 inpatients are being operated and 5750 patients are seen in the policlinics.

In the past 30 years the department has published more than 200 published papers in international and national scientific periodicals. A total of 36 pediatric surgeons have been trained in this department and serve nationwide. A graduate of our department, Prof. Münci Kalayoğlu heads a very successful liver transplantation program in Wisconsin, USA, today.

The spirit and driving force behind all this achievement belongs to Mr. Herbert Eckstein. We remember him with deep respect.