

THE CLUBFOOT REVOLUTION



A dramatic change has taken place in the treatment of clubfoot (talipes equinovarus) in the last twenty years but it appears that the orthopedic community may have inadvertently kept this new treatment a secret from the

PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE WEB

rest of the medical community. As Rotarians we should take pride that Rotary International played a role in changing the treatment of clubfeet for the better.

The long established method of treatment was the Kite method with early serial casting which corrected many club feet. However, there were many recurrent deformities and these were treated with extensive surgical procedures. Where long term follow up was possible the feet were often found to be somewhat inflexible and sometimes were painful.

The change began in Uganda with Dr. Norgood Penny, a volunteer orthopedic surgeon from Canada. Dr. Penny found himself overwhelmed with recalcitrant clubfoot cases requiring long hours in the operating theatre for correction. Dr. Penny searched and found a better way, the Ponseti method.

Dr. Ponseti from Iowa, USA, had been using his own method for treatment for several decades but orthopedic specialists continued to favor the Kite method. Ponseti also began treatment with serial casting but the counter pressure was on the subluxed head of the talus and not in the sinus tarsi. The casting was continued for four weeks and if correction was not attained, a percutaneous

tenotomy was performed on the Achilles tendon followed by continued serial casting and then night bracing.

Dr. Penny launched a scientific study funded by The Rotary Foundation to determine if the Ponseti method could be adapted to treatment of the large number of recalcitrant club feet that he found in Uganda, The results were very promising. In 2005 the Uganda government with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency established forty clubfoot clinics in Uganda manned by physical therapists and physician assistants for the treatment of clubfoot with the Ponseti method. The results of Dr. Penny's study strongly supported the use of the Ponseti method over the Kite method.

Today on a worldwide basis the Ponseti method is the universally accepted method of choice for the treatment of clubfeet. A few of the children return at age five or six with a foot out of balance and in mild inversion. The imbalance is easily corrected by a tendon transfer.

The results have been most gratifying with children ending up with well corrected supple feet.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coLmv6ehGbQ>

Youtube - A Walking Miracle - The Ponseti Method for Clubfoot Treatment by Lane Wyrick