



Sumukha Foundation

Vision:

To provide uncompromised quality of surgical / medical care to patients with Oral / Maxillofacial deformities from economically weak families.

Background:

In India, 1 in every 1000 new born live babies has either a cleft lip or a cleft palate which is the most common form of oral / maxillofacial (OMF) deformity. However OMF deformities have a much wider range than just clefts. 20% of the population have some form of maxillofacial deformity. OMF deformities are those that affect the cheeks, oral cavity and chin. They can be congenital - at birth or acquired - in trauma or cancer. International data shows that 20–60% of all automobile accidents result in facial fractures.

The most obvious complication of maxillofacial deformity is that the aesthetics of the individual are affected. However there are more serious complications that could occur, such as: feeding difficulties, recurrent ear infections and hearing loss, aspiration pneumonia, feeding difficulties, dental problems, speech difficulties and psychological stress.

Without surgery, children with maxillofacial deformities grow up facing stigma / discrimination and undergo repeated health problems. Adults undergo various social issues such as inability to find a life partner, inability to secure a job or lack of self-confidence.

The long term financial implications of a cleft lip / palate are many and result from morbidity, health care, emotional disturbance, social exclusion and restricted employment opportunities for affected individuals, their families. In extreme cases, maxillofacial defects have also led to foeticide and infanticide or withdrawal of care giving.

These conditions are easily correctible by reconstructive surgery. However, in India more than half those affected by maxillofacial deformities are unable to access the treatment available as they are from economically poor families.

About Sumukha Foundation:

The Sumukha Foundation was established in 2007 with the mission of providing access to multi-speciality health care for people with maxillofacial deformities from poor socio-economic background. The services of the Foundation are innovative considering that other places in India that do not provide the comprehensive range of services. For eg: Maxillofacial Reconstruction requires expertise of speech therapist, orthodontist, ENT surgeon and maxillofacial surgeon.

The OMF surgeons do not charge a fee for the surgeries. Hence most of the Foundation's funds are used to buy medicines, surgical materials that are required and hospitalization of the patient post-operatively.

At Sumukha Foundation, all these activities are available under one umbrella.

Services:

a. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS): Sumukha Foundation has always worked within hospital settings while conducting the surgeries. Currently the surgeries and post operative care is provided at St. Philomena's Hospital (a 400 bed multi-specialty hospital in Bangalore that caters to the middle, lower middle and poor sections of society; which provides free services for patients from poor socio-economic background). The hospital has well equipped operation theaters, an NICU, ICU,

laboratory and most importantly a team of highly qualified and experienced medical personnel. This team assists the OMF surgeon who is from Sumukha Foundation. The cost of surgery to the hospital is borne by the Foundation.

- b. Dental care for patients from economically weak background:** The Foundation provides services on a cost recovery model. Those with affordability pay for treatment. Those who can-not, are given 50%, 75% and 100% discounts.
- c. Follow-up:** Children who undergo OMFS are followed up till the age of 16. Adults are followed up as per the treatment schedule.
- d. Data collection:** Currently there isn't any data regarding OMF deformity in India. The Foundation is setting up a data base which will record all the cases seen and document the surgery undertaken and the outcome of surgery.

Impact:

For every child that receives reconstructive surgery there will be a financial impact (improved chances of employment and reduced cost of repeated hospitalization). They would have equal chances of employment and marriage as others. By providing surgery, this venture would contribute towards reduction of hospitalization costs due to associated respiratory infections. Considering that in the public health setting, it would cost about Rs 2000/- to treat a simple lower respiratory infection and that children with OMF are prone to have such infections at-least once a year, for 1000 children followed up over 13 years, the savings would be nearly INR 2.5 crores.

Improved health and growth would lead to better employment chances and this would further decrease the economic burden on the government.

Apart from the monetary benefits, there are a number of social and psychological benefits for the children.

Methodology used:

- a. Camps to identify patients with maxilla-facial deformity:** Sumukha Foundation networks with pediatricians, orthopedic surgeons, ENT surgeons and gynecologists in-order to conduct effective awareness camps. The camps are used as a platform to educate the general population, teachers, anganwadi workers, NGOs and CBOs regarding the problem of maxillofacial deformity. Through such raised awareness, people refer those who are affected by maxillofacial deformities to Sumukha Foundation for reconstructive surgery.
- b. Linkages with pediatricians, gynecologists and general physicians / family physicians:** The Foundation holds dissemination sessions at hospitals in-order to make doctors aware about the services available. Doctors then refer patients to the Foundation for surgery.
- c. Counseling:** Forms an integral part of rehabilitation for people with maxilla-facial deformity. For children born with these deformities, the parents need to understand the difficulties faced by the child, the surgical options available and also post operative care involved. For adults, the counseling involves preparing them for the surgery, helping them understand the

degree of correction that can be attained and regarding post operative care. During the initial follow-up period patients require supportive counseling as it takes some time for the body to function normally post-operatively.

- d. **Medical evaluation:** The earlier the reconstruction surgery is done, the better the chances of rehabilitation. All patients are evaluated at St. Philomena's hospital by an ENT surgeon, pediatrician, speech therapist and maxillofacial surgeon. This multidisciplinary evaluation helps prepare for the surgery and also plan for post operative care and rehabilitation.
- e. **Dental Camps for the urban and rural poor:** Nearly 60% of the Indian population have no access to dental healthcare either due to lack of facilities in the villages or due to the cost of dental care. Sumukha Foundation partners with community based organizations to provide free dental camps in slums and villages in and around Bangalore.

Future Plans & Sustainability:

For immediate sustainability, Sumukha Foundation has started the SJ Dental Clinic. This clinic runs in the city of Bangalore and generates incomes through which the Foundation continues to provide surgeries.

The long term aim of Sumukha Foundation is to start an institute that will make OMFS and rehabilitation accessible to all.

The main activities at the Institution will be centred around:

1. Centre of excellence for maxillofacial surgery with uncompromised quality of services for all economic sections of society
2. Centre of training for dentists who aspire to become maxillofacial surgeons
3. Centre of research and development for dental surgery

The first phase of development will be to establish the Sumukha Foundation Dental Clinic. Here patients will be screened for surgery. Minor dental procedures will be undertaken at the clinic. The major reconstructive surgeries will be done at the link hospitals like St. Philomena's.

Over the next three years, the Foundation will work towards setting up the institute. This involves getting the right premises, the necessary permits and also hiring a team of consultants and para-medical staff.

Once the institute is set up, the revenue from the training centre and the dental clinic will fund the OMFS activities.

Organization Profile

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