

Persian Orthopedic Trauma Association: History and Activities

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Background

The popularity of Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Osteosynthesefragen (German for "Association for the Study of Internal Fixation") or AO method among the surgeons and organization of Iranian chapter of AO Alumni Association is well known and not possible to be ignored, but it was necessary to find a way to have trauma training as before and hold events and courses under the umbrella of a scientific association.

Therefore, the Persian Orthopedic Trauma Association (POTA) was founded in 2002. The association has focused on training and proper treatment of all kinds of traumas related to extremities and spine. In this regard, we are in close relations with professionals for scientific exchanges. Some of the activities of POTA are: seasonal scientific meeting, scientific events in different provinces of the country, nursing orthopedic workshop, POTA board, and Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) and Prehospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) training classes.

POTA is one of the associated societies of European Federation of National Association of Orthopedics and Traumatology (EFFORT) and has started to do the same aim with German Congress of Orthopedics and Traumatology (DKOU). POTA has begun publishing a magazine titled "the Journal of Orthopedic and Spine Trauma (JOSTrauma)" that aims at trauma-related issues especially in the developing countries.

History

Many years ago, general surgeons were in charge of the management of many orthopedic problems such as fractures, dislocations, and even tendon and ligament injuries. Gradually, the increasing complexity of the trauma care and high rate of complications obliged general surgeons to abandon this field. The prominent role of orthopedic surgeons was generally recognized by scientific and public societies thereafter (1).

Years ago, this change was established and cases of extremity trauma were no longer referred to general surgeons. At that time, the training program provided by the American School of Medicine was the most dominant and influential training plan in Iran. American-trained orthopedic surgeons generally followed the policy of "conservative treatment" like traction and casting, instead

of open reduction and internal fixation (ORIF). Even after internal fixation, they preferred to apply cast for at least 6 weeks. There was no tendency for the early mobilization of the affected joint, which naturally increased the risk of fractures (1).

About 30 years ago, I got familiar with the "AO Foundation" and the "Swiss School of Fracture Treatment". I was only 32 when I participated in an AO course in Davos, Switzerland. As a young orthopedic surgeon, I found the course very attractive and efficient. During the course, we were invited to a cozy hotel in Davos to have lunch with the hosts from "Mathys Company". All the roads were covered with fresh snow and it was freezing outside. After lunch, while I was enjoying my hot tea and a piece of Swiss chocolate, I asked Prof. Edi Fasel if it was possible to have such a course in Iran. He opened his calendar and said: "Yes, it is possible, but two years from now." Like the rest of life, two years passed like a blink. Our dream finally came true, because of good intentions and relentless work. The AO team, led by Prof. Ulrich Holz, came to Tehran, Iran, and we had the first basic and operating room personnel (ORP) course (2).

During the next years, AO training became very popular and attractive for surgeons and ORP. Gradually, the treatment of trauma cases changed from strictly conservative to more effective, like ORIF. The popularity of the AO methods among the surgeons and the Iranian chapter of AO Foundation was well-recognized and undeniable. Surprisingly, the Ministry of Health and Medical Education ignored it. Thus, it was necessary to find a way to hold trauma training as before and bring events and courses under the umbrella of a scientific association (3).

In 2001, Dr. Dariush Savadkoobi and I were invited to a 2-week training of locking plates in Aarau, Switzerland. During our spare time, he tried to convince me to register POTA in Iran.

When I returned to Tehran, I decided to get it done. The process had many complexities and required good connections and knowing the system. Because I was the chief executive officer (CEO) of Atieh Hospital, Tehran, it became the official office of this young association. The first board election was held there and POTA was born in 2002. It is now officially registered as a scientific association at the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (2).

Activity

The first scientific annual meeting of POTA was scheduled for November 2005 at Atieh Hospital in Tehran. The main subject of the meeting was "upper limb trauma". During four days of this event, we discussed papers written by POTA members and presentations by faculties from all over the country. Guest speakers were from Switzerland, Germany, and Austria. The second annual meeting was held on 12-15 December 2006 for four days at Atieh Hospital. The topic of the meeting was "foot and ankle injuries". It involved lectures, case presentations, expert panels, and guest speakers from Austria and Switzerland. On 11-14 March 2007, we had our third annual meeting for four days at Atieh Hospital. The subject was "complications of upper and lower limb fractures". The meeting contained lectures, case presentations, and expert panels. The guest speakers were from Germany (2).

Between 2008 and 2017, POTA annual meetings were held in cooperation with the orthopedic group of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Besides annual meetings, POTA seasonal events were organized since 2008. The DVDs of each seasonal program are available and can be purchased from the Office of POTA.

In addition to the annual and seasonal meetings, we have two scientific events each year in different provinces of the country. These events are organized in cooperation with the orthopedic departments of different medical universities. Moreover, we have an annual POTA board exam. It is an online trauma exam for orthopedic surgeons and final-year residents. Top three are awarded a scientific trip. POTA also provides orthopedic nursing workshops four times a year. Nurses from orthopedic departments of all hospitals are invited to this two-day meeting. They receive training in the management of orthopedic and trauma patients.

Since 2009, POTA has been one of the associated scientific societies of EFORT. Since 2015, our aims have been in accordance with the DKOU. Iranian faculties held one or two of the international sessions of DKOU since 2016, aiming to introduce trauma management in Iran and create the opportunity for mutual collaborations. We cherish further cooperation with this association (2).

Since December 2011, both ATLS and PHTLS training

classes have been offered four times a year in Iran by POTA, under license of the American College of Surgeons (ACS). Both orthopedic and non-orthopedic physicians can pass this course and receive a certificate (3).

POTA holds the Board of Trustees assembly once a year, in which the annual activities of the association are reported to the members, and general decisions are made.

The official publication of POTA is the "JOSTrauma", which was initially published in September 2015. The purpose of JOSTrauma is to increase knowledge, stimulate research, and improve management in various fields of orthopedic trauma, especially in developing countries. It is an international, peer-reviewed, open-access online journal, which is affiliated to POTA and orthopedic department of Tehran University of Medical Sciences.

The accepted article types in JOST include:

- Review article
- Educational Corner
- Original article
- Case report
- Commentary

For more information and manuscript submission, please refer to our web portal (<http://jost.tums.ac.ir>). We welcome your submissions, comments, and ideas.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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