

Orthopaedic Connection

Orthopaedics Or Orthopedics

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

I am occasionally asked a question concerning my spelling of Orthopaedic Surgery. Why do I spell it one way when you see it spelled Orthopedic Surgery at times (i.e. without the a before the e).

I'm smart enough (I hope) to realize this isn't a huge concern among readers!

But what the heck, for the 3 or 4 of you who might care, here goes. And I'll throw in some other background stuff too about where the specialty came from.

France 1741

A French surgeon is given credit for coining the word. He published a book in French of course, called "Orthopaedia: The Art of Correcting and preventing Deformities in Children" (English translation).

The correction of spinal and bony deformities became the cornerstone of the specialty.

The author, Nicholas Andry combined two Greek words, orthos (straight) and paideion (child) to form the new French word.

At some uncertain point in time the slightly shorter version Orthopedics began to take hold. In the United States it is acceptable to refer to the specialty as Orthopedics although the majority of University residency programs have always spelled it Orthopaedic Surgery.

And the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery and the Cleveland Clinic where I trained have always spelled it using the a.

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons is the largest and most prestigious Orthopaedic organization in the world. I am proud to be a member.

In addition, throughout the British Commonwealth and the rest of the English speaking world, Orthopaedics is standard.

Training

In the United States Orthopaedic Surgeons typically complete four years of college, four years of medical school and undergo residency training in Orthopaedic Surgery for 6 years.

In personal terms, I was 32 years old before I had a regular job outside of my training!

There is some overlap with other specialties in our work. For example hand surgery is practiced by some plastic surgeons and spine surgery is shared between Neurosurgery and Orthopaedic Surgery.

Board Certification is attained by passing a comprehensive written and oral examination given by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery.

Scope of Practice

Besides treating fractures of all types from the beginning, the specialty of Orthopaedic Surgery has evolved unbelievably over the years since the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons was founded in 1933.

Arthroscopic surgery of many joints, replacement of joints large and small, successful treatment of hugely complicated fractures are now commonplace and practically taken for granted by the public.

The range of Orthopaedic Surgery is vast.

We treat disorders from the neck to the toes and all stops in between including bones, joints, muscles, ligaments and nerves. In two words, the *musculoskeletal system*.

It is not for the weak or faint of heart. Try reducing a dislocated hip or trying to do a total knee replacement on a patient who weighs 275 pounds. In another situation I may be replacing a finger joint or repairing a nerve in the hand with the aid of surgical magnification.

Orthopaedic Surgery is hard work and can be physically demanding, but the opportunity as our mission states, *“To help people return to more pain free, functional lives”* makes it very worthwhile.

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It contains a world of musculoskeletal information you and your family and friends can use! Website, Your Orthopaedic Connection, Archive of all previous GCH articles. Please check it out. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush