



## TRADITIONAL BONE SETTERS; PREFERENCE AND PATRONAGE

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## INTRODUCTION

Traditional ways of treating the patient were present in all societies when no modern medical care was present. Therefore traditional medicine has an important role in the healthcare delivery system. These traditional ways are used for different diseases, and its use reserved for those diseases when not treated by other form of medicine.<sup>1</sup>

Dime in 1995 illustrated the idea of traditional medicine that natural sources have active ingredients that has the power to heal wound or treat illness. There are some hidden supernatural forces, that has the power to heal the illness and this can be maneuvered by the people who has the knowledge to give a strange and good result.<sup>2</sup> Traditional medicine is an art which has different type of specializations.<sup>3</sup> Traditional medical care specialist use plants, mineral and trace elements

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**ABSTRACT... Objectives:** To evaluate the factors for preferring the traditional bone setters by people. **Study Design:** Observational study. **Setting:** Department of Orthopedics and Spine Surgery Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar. **Period:** October, 2013 to March, 2014. **Materials and Methods:** Sixty consecutive patients who presented at orthopedics out-patient clinic after attending Traditional Bone Setting Centers were recruited for the study. Information about the patients' bio data, mechanism of injury, who advised them to contact TBS and what are the factors that compelled them to attend TBS were obtained and filled into prepared proforma. The data obtained was recorded and analyzed on SPSS version 17. **Results:** The mean age was 25.57 years with minimum age 5 years and maximum 65 years. Sixteen patients were females and 44 were male. Two (3.3%) patients first attended Modern orthopedic services (MOS) and 58(96.7%) patients attended TBS. 47(78.3%) patients were taken by their own immediate family members to TBS, 20% were referred by friends and 1.7% were self-referral. Thirty seven (61.7%) opted for TBS because of their belief, 11(18.3%) considered this service cheap, 7(11.7%) attended it because it is quick service and 5 (8.3%) reverted to TBS because of attitude of hospital personals. **Conclusion:** A considerable of people still have great trust on TBS regarding management of musculoskeletal problems. Belief is the most leading cause of consulting traditional bonesetters, other causes include low cost, quick service and attitude of hospital personnel.

**Key words:** Traditional bonesetter (TBS), Modern orthopedic services (MOS), Fracture, Belief, Gangrene, Amputation.

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and certain parts of animals. They also use other methods such as prayers, recitation, divinations and incantations.<sup>4</sup> Traditional medical care specialist who deals with bone, joints, muscles and ligaments are called Traditional bone setter (TBS). TBS are well known in third world countries for treating joint dislocation and joint sprains and different types of fractures. They manipulate fractures and apply wooden bar around the fractures and also apply different types of herbs and other material around the affected area for healing.<sup>5</sup>

The traditional bone setter is a lay man for fracture and joints treatment. S/he is an unqualified practitioner in allopathic medicine that has taken up the experience of fracture treatment from his forefather who has no formal training in modern orthopedics.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the patients have high confidence in TBS and that is why they prefer them in their communities<sup>7,8</sup>. The reasons for high confidence in TBS are multiple. Patients have cultural belief in TBS, it is economical, easily accessible to the patients, its services are quick, and friends and families pressurize patients for TBS.<sup>9</sup>

Some people who have fractures, from far flung areas has a belief that referring a patient to a teaching hospital means that amputation of the limb is mandatory.<sup>10</sup>

Ogunlusi and his colleagues has identified other factors for preferring TBS. These factors are fear of metal work inside or outside of limb; Convenience and flexibility of TBS; Familiarity with TBS and unfamiliarity with orthodox center and patients recognize them as specialists for bone and joint diseases.<sup>11</sup>The objective of this study is to evaluate the factors for preferring the traditional bone setters by people.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This observational study was conducted in the Department of Orthopedics and Spine Surgery Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar from October, 2013 to March, 2014. Sixty consecutive patients who presented at orthopedics out-patient clinic after attending Traditional Bone Setters(TBS) were recruited for the study. Patients of any age group with musculoskeletal trauma who received their initial treatment from TBS were included in the study while patient who consulted other modern orthopedic services (MOS) after being treated by TBS were excluded from the

study. Data like who has forced the patients to go to TBS like family, friend or self and what was the reason for going to TBS like Attitude of hospital staff, Belief, Cheaper service, Quicker service are all recorded and entered into prepared proforma. The data obtained was analyzed on SPSS version 17.

**RESULTS**

There were total sixty patients. Sixteen patients (26.7%) were females and 44(73.3%) were male (Table-I).

The mean age was 25.57 years with minimum age 5 years and maximum 65 years (Table-II).

Thirty six (60%) of cases were due to falls and 24(40%) were due to Road Traffic Accident (RTA) (Table-III).

Two (3.3%) patients first attended Modern orthopedic services (MOS) and 58(96.7%) patients attended TBS (Table-IV).

Forty seven (78.3%) patients were taken by their own immediate family members to TBS, 20% were referred by friends and 1.7% were self-referral (Table-V).

Thirty seven (61.7%) opted for TBS because of their belief, 11(18.3%) considered this service cheap, 7(11.7%) attended it because it is quick service and 5 (8.3%) reverted to TBS because of attitude of hospital personals Sixty percent of cases were due to falls and 40% were due to RTA (Table-VI).

Gender Of Patients				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	16	26.7	26.7	26.7
Male	44	73.3	73.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table-I.

STATISTICS		
		Age Of the Patients
N	Valid	60
	Missing	0
	Mean	25.57
	Median	20.00
	Mode	7
	Std. Deviation	19.788
	Minimum	5
	Maximum	65
	<b>Table-II.</b>	

Mechanism of Injury				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
falls	36	60.0	60.0	60.0
Road traffic accident	24	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	
<b>Table-III.</b>				

Consultations				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Modern orthopedic services	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
Traditional bone setters	58	96.7	96.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	
<b>Table-IV.</b>				

Referred By				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Family	47	78.3	78.3	78.3
Friend	12	20.0	20.0	98.3
Self	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	
<b>Table-V.</b>				

WHY PEOPLE PREFER TBS				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Attitude of hospital staff	5	8.3	8.3	8.3
Belief	37	61.7	61.7	70.0
Cheaper service	11	18.3	18.3	88.3
Quicker service	7	11.7	11.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	
<b>Table-VI.</b>				

## DISCUSSION

In their study Ogunlusiet al<sup>12</sup> found out that most people visit traditional bone setters because they wanted cheaper and quicker services than modern treatment. Another study revealed that eighty-five percent of patients who presented with femoral fractures to an Orthopedic Hospital had been to traditional bonesetters (TBS) prior to going to the hospital.<sup>13</sup>

Only 3.3% of the patients in our study initially were taken to hospitals while studies by Solagberu<sup>14</sup> have the frequency of 43% and Dada et al<sup>15</sup> have 40%. This difference of results needs in depth inquiry of deficiency in the health care in order to such happening in future. In our study there were 73.3% male patients which shows that large portion of patients are predominantly male who seeks TBS treatment.

The reasons for preference of TBSs are similar in studies conducted in Africa.<sup>16,17</sup> TBS is preferred by patients that they are more skillful for fracture treatment, readily and everywhere available and with TBS treatment fracture heal quickly than the orthodox medical care.<sup>18</sup> Almost similar studies has been conducted by others.<sup>16,19</sup>

The most important factor for preference of the TBS was the beliefs of people. People feel better when treated by TBS than treated by orthodox medical personal. Studies also showed patients has the belief that TBS treatment is cheap to them.<sup>20,21</sup>

Current study also shows that 18.3% patients considered it cheaper and 11.7% patients consider it quicker treatment. This is comparable to the study by Thanni, who pointed out that TBS services are cheaper that attract many patients.<sup>16</sup>

Current study shows that one of the important factors for preferring the TBS is the opinion of family and friends. It was found that 98.3% of patients were forced by their family members and friends to TBS; which is comparable with Solagberu and Dada et al studies, where they found 75% and 25% of patients were referred by relative or friend respectively.<sup>14,15</sup> Family or friends are influential in referring a patient for treatment because of the existing social system in Pakistan where they will normally contribute towards cost of treatment.

## CONCLUSION

Despite a large number of qualified orthopedic surgeons and well-equipped hospitals in Pakistan at the

moment, traditional bonesetters treat a large portion of our population. Instead of dreadful and life threatening complications, people still prefer TBS. Possible reasons for this include culture and beliefs, ignorance and third-party advice, and also overcrowding of hospitals with trauma cases.

Awareness programs should be arranged nationwide to inform the masses about the complications that arise from treatment given by traditional bone setters.

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### PREVIOUS RELATED STUDY

Nabeel Dastgir, Kamran Khalid Butt, Nausheen Nabeel. Musculoskeletal injuries by bone setters (Original) Professional Med J Jul-Aug 2012;19(4): 446-448.

### AUTHORSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION DECLARATION

Sr. #	Author-s Full Name	Contribution to the paper	Author=s Signature
1	Dr. Imran Khan	Data collection idea	
2	Dr. Mohammad Saeed	Data collection	
3	Dr. Muhammad Inam	analysis, writing	
4	Prof. Mohammad Arif	Critical analysis, Final approval	