

Ponseti Method Training



Over the past 15 years, Ponseti International Association personnel have participated in training programs in more than 80 countries. In addition to developing competency in applying the Ponseti Method, program participants are advised on how to establish locally-directed, equitable, and sustainable clubfoot clinics and to further disseminate the Ponseti Method in their communities and country.

Pediatric orthopedic specialists have been the principal champions of the Ponseti Method although physical therapists, nurses, cast technicians, orthopedic officers, and other supervised healthcare professionals can make significant contributions to many aspects of the treatment. On average, each skilled Ponseti provider can treat 50 new patients each year (or one new patient each week) assuming he/she conducts a clubfoot clinic one day each week as part of an active clinical practice. Since each patient is seen multiple times for serial manipulation and casting, as well as follow-up, 50 new patients per provider per year has proven to be a typical, manageable caseload, even in low-resource settings. Using this estimate, treating the estimated 200,000 new cases of clubfoot each year requires approximately 4,000 Ponseti-proficient providers globally. Taking into account the uneven distribution of clubfoot cases in various locations, the number of providers needed is estimated to be closer to 5,000. Currently there are approximately 500 PIA-recognized skilled providers in the world.

Based on PIA's years of experience, the most effective and efficient Method for training healthcare professionals focuses on one-on-one mentoring since the method requires great attention to detail and precise manipulation and casting, usually of very small, infant feet. The theoretical basis of the method can be taught using typical didactic approaches (lecture, video, distance education, etc) but the skill to actually apply the technique needs to be learned through hands-on mentoring by an experienced, skilled trainer.



In addition, follow-up of trainees and their clinical outcomes are critical to assure good results and to evaluate the impact of the training. After the training, most professionals demonstrate a learning curve while they perfect the Ponseti Method. Based on current experience and a follow-up study, to be proficient in the method requires treating 25-30 patients, which usually takes 6-8 months if one new patient is seen every week.

Therefore, a comprehensive training program should consist of:

- (1) Didactic sessions either by virtual webinars or in person meetings.
 - (2) Trainee spending 1-2 weeks working side-by-side with an experienced mentor at a recognized Center of Excellence for the treatment of clubfoot.
 - (3) The mentor making a follow-up visit to the trainee's home institution 6-8 months later; and
 - (4) On-going participation in PIA's scientific and clinical educational activities, including video conferences and continuing education programs.
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