

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR A LEFT-HANDED O&G SPECIALIST

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INTRODUCTION

Around 10% of the world population are left-handed. The same statistic applies to doctors.

O&G is a speciality which has heavy involvement in practical skills.

This can pose as an initial adaptational difficulty to left handed doctors as most of the time the available instruments are for right handed operators.

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Communication: In outpatient department, theatre, examination rooms, etc. letting the colleagues know beforehand for appropriate placements of the illumination light, scanner, surgical trolleys, diathermy pads, imaging screens in laparoscopy, etc. suitable for a left-handed perspective. This not only provides a streamlined set up but also saves time and undue activities.
- Informing the surgical supervisor/assistant of their position and consider they might feel slight loss of orientation as they are standing on a surgeon's side from a right-hand perspective.
- Ratcheted instruments: Mostly are for right-handed surgeons and will close if attempting to open by the left hand. The thumb-index finger technique is useful. Another technique is to point the tip to the caudal end instead of the cranial end when quick haemostasis is need.
- USS: It's useful to use right hand to hold the probe and keeping the left hand for typing and carrying out US guided procedures.
- Knot tying: Watching videos for a visual guidance while using left hand.
- Right mediolateral episiotomy: Between contractions, the right hand is used as a guard between the fetal head and the perineum while the left hand used to apply episiotomy

TAKE HOME POINTS

Communication is important before any examinations/procedures/surgeries as the set up needs to be changed.

Discussing with other left-handed doctors is useful.

Sometimes supervised surgical/practical skills can be challenging as the supervisor may have difficulties in orientating with a left-handed doctor.

Left handedness is an advantage as it improves communications skills and ambidexterity along with an excellent surgical supervising skills to junior doctors.