

Ponseti training workshop at Grey's to tackle clubfoot

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THERE are about 800 babies born with clubfoot in KwaZulu-Natal per year, but not enough medical professionals trained to treat the condition.

Steps, a non-profit organisation focused on helping children born with clubfoot, in partnership with Grey's Hospital, held a Ponseti training workshop on Friday, training orthopedic surgeons, occupational therapists, physios, nurses, plaster technicians and orthotists on how to apply the Ponseti method used to correct clubfoot.

Clubfoot is a condition where the foot is deformed and is twisted inwards and the sole cannot be placed flat on the ground.

Karen Moss founded the Steps organisation in 2005 after her son was born with clubfoot in 2003. She was not happy to have invasive surgery performed on her boy and after extensive research, she found Dr Ponseti in the U.S. state of Iowa.

Ponseti was 89 years old when he treated her son's feet and had been doing the method for 15 years.

He had developed a method of manipulating babies' feet and applying plaster casts to correct their feet. This happens within about two months.

Thereafter the babies wear braces which they sleep with, up to the age of

about four years.

After her son was treated, Moss started blogging and talking to health professionals about the Ponseti method of treating clubfoot.

The method was welcomed in South Africa and now many health professionals are being trained.

Moss said the organisation provides training on the method, parent support, clinic support and distribution of the clubfoot braces.

"If the method is done by a well trained person and is followed through properly, the child is able to walk like any other child, that is what is so incredible about this," said Moss.

"I am inspired every day when I see those little feet and I know in a few weeks they are going to be straight," said Moss.

Moss said they are trying to get the message out to people that clubfoot is no one's fault as often mothers blame themselves and think there is something they might have done wrong while pregnant.

"We urge mothers not to hide their children away but to seek assistance as early as possible because the condition is treatable," said Moss.

After the Ponseti training workshop, medical professionals will be able to apply the Ponseti method and hopefully make a huge impact on the clubfoot community in KZN.



Medical professionals Katherine Troisi and Peter Maré put a cast on five-month-old baby Ntsika's leg to correct his clubfoot and demonstrate the Ponseti Method at Grey's Hospital on Friday.

PHOTO: JANINE VAN WYK