

# Bengal Journal of Otolaryngology and Head Neck Surgery

Official Publication of The Association of Otolaryngologists of India, West Bengal

**Volume 26 No. 3 - December, 2018**

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*p-ISSN: 2395-2393*

*e-ISSN: 2395-2407*

*RNI No.: 62551/95*



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*RNI No.: 62551/95*



## **Bengal Journal of Otolaryngology and Head Neck Surgery**

(Incorporating and directly descended from State Journal of Otolaryngology and Otolaryngology, Calcutta)

### *Published by*

The Association of Otolaryngologists of India, West Bengal  
CMC House, 91B Chittaranjan Avenue,  
Kolkata - 700073,  
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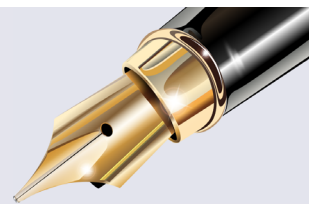
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## *From the Desk of the Editor*



Surgical outcome has been progressively refined by technological advancements and innovations but a surgeon's greatest asset remains knowledge of the human anatomy, a subject which has remained relatively unchanged albeit intricately evolving. Galen's information from animal dissection evolved over fifteen centuries into Vesalius' accurate depictions from cadaveric dissection but only three centuries later, in 1858, Henry Gray and Henry Vandyke Carter revolutionised human anatomy with the inaugural edition of Gray's Anatomy, a book which continues to expand with our knowledge on the subject.

The field of otolaryngology expanded to incorporate a variety of interdisciplinary activities as intricate knowledge helped surgical navigation through anatomical labyrinths. Functional aspects of organs were defined through meticulous research on microstructural and ultrastructural details of anatomy as the surgeons' trepidation was replaced by a respect for the integrity of anatomical structures. We have progressed from the days where Mosher, in 1929, described ethmoidal sinus surgery as an easy way of killing a patient to a time where basic ethmoidal sinus surgeries are done even by surgical residents under supervision. The focus in sinus surgery has shifted from a gross structural study to one of understanding the various drainage pathways and their normal anatomical variations.

The otoendoscope has added another dimension to the field of otology. Studies regarding the mucosal folds and the pathways of ventilation of the middle ear and the endoscopic anatomy of the region has enhanced the understanding and tackling of ear pathologies while the description of natural variations has enabled surgeons to avoid common pitfalls during ear surgery. Life-changing procedures like cochlear implants have also been made possible due to detailed anatomical knowledge.

In 1977, Hirano's description of the ultrastructure of vocal cords revolutionised laryngeal surgery and coupled with the progress of optical instruments, mirror-guided laryngeal surgery and stripping of vocal cords have been supplanted by function-preserving microscopic surgeries with microflap techniques. Head and neck oncology, with exhaustive descriptions of the complex anatomy of the concerned region, has gradually evolved from just radical dissection to a more conservative approach, efforts being made to maintain oncological safety with minimal deprivation of functional integrity.

In essence, anatomy has not changed; what has changed is our understanding of the subject. The realisation that surgical procedures should consider the functional aspects of anatomical structures and be suitably modified remains the mainstay of further progress in our complex field.

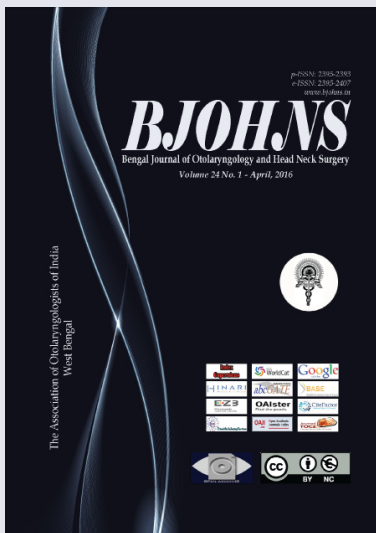
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