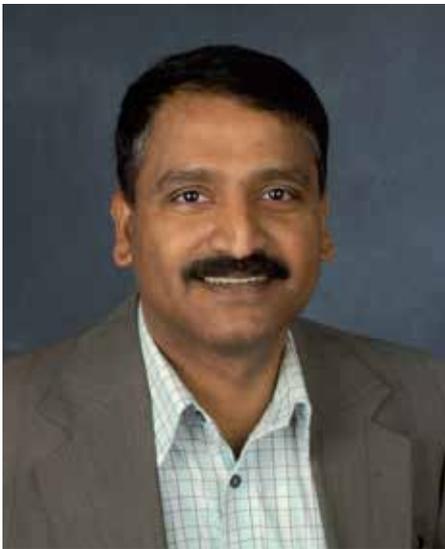




Dear Colleague

## What's new at Braemar?

Braemar paediatric surgeon **Askar Kukkady** achieved worldwide recognition when he led the team that separated conjoined twins in Hamilton, a decade ago. But he says his work provides highlights every day...



Braemar paediatric surgeon Askar Kukkady's career in New Zealand began with a dream. But it was almost stymied from day one.

In 1997, Dr Kukkady was weighing up his next career move after completing paediatric surgical training as International Fellow at The Children's Hospital in Los Angeles. He intended

to return to India. But his wife had a dream. 'She said she dreamt we were living in a very green, peaceful country; a very beautiful country, New Zealand.'

So he listened to his wife's heart and travelled here with their two little girls.

But when he arrived in this country, with no job and no home, he found his paediatric qualifications weren't recognised. "I was advised by colleagues to change my field of medicine. That was never an option for me, so I went right back to square one and did my FRACS (Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons) qualification."

Seven years after his arrival, and now working as Consultant Paediatric Surgeon at Waikato Hospital, he headed the team that performed one of the most difficult and rare operations, separating pygopus conjoined twins (joined at the base

of the spine and pelvis). The condition is a one-in-three-million anomaly and there were fewer than 30 cases of successful separations at the time and none in Australasia.

Today, the twins, who are nearly 11, are bright and healthy girls. For his work, Dr Kukkady received health and innovation awards and was named as one of the top 10 New Zealanders of the Year in 2004.

He says the 22-hour operation, in which he led a team of 55 specialists and medical staff, was undoubtedly the highlight of his medical career to date. But adds that the field of paediatrics provides similar – but perhaps not as dramatic – high points every day.

"It is profoundly satisfying to make children better. It can be challenging – for example operating on a newborn weighing 500-600gms – but when the outcome is successful, it is hugely uplifting."

He says any procedure has to look at the outcome for the patient at age 70, not just for 5-10 years. "We want the children to be healthy adults."

Transferring the care of child patients when they reach adulthood is often hard. "Some patients we deliberately follow. Others we farewell reluctantly. It can be heart-wrenching when they move on."

He says he was drawn to paediatrics because he has always loved interacting with children as patients or otherwise. "But also professionally, the field of paediatric surgery offers such a variety of procedures – Head and Neck, Thoracic, Urology and Abdominal. We provide the whole surgical package for children."

Dr Kukkady says many parents in New Zealand are well-informed when it comes to their children's health. "They will sometimes tell me things I need to research."

But parents sometimes assume the worst outcome. "If a child has a lump in their neck, they believe it is cancer. I don't blame them. They assume what happens to adults, happens to children. But children are not small adults. They don't look like them; they don't behave like them; they don't have the same diseases. Cancers in children are very uncommon."

He says a lot of what he does is reassuring. "Parents want to be reassured. If you are not sure, send the child to us."

He says parents can feel confident about the standard of care in in New Zealand. "We can be very proud that our specialists are well trained."

At Braemar Hospital, Dr Kukkady specialises in paediatric surgery, paediatric urology, paediatric endoscopy, laparoscopy and thoracoscopy.

**IN APRIL, HE MOVES HIS PRACTICE ROOMS TO SPECIALISTS @ ANGLESEA, AT ANGLESEA CLINIC IN THACKERAY STREET IN HAMILTON.**

Kind Regards,



Dr Greg Spark – Deputy Chairman

## Mr Askar Kukaddy

### Qualifications

MMB BS 1983

Master of Surgery (MS) 1988

Magister Chirurgiae (MCh) (Paed) 1990

FRCS (Edin) 1994

FRACS (Paeds) 2003

### Rooms at

Specialists @ Anglesea, Gate 2, Suite 32, Anglesea Clinic, Thackeray St, PO Box 228, Hamilton

**Phone:** 07 834 0717

**Mobile:** 021 382 637

**Fax:** 07 834 0729

**Email:** paedsurg.kukkady@gmail.com

### Areas of Specialisation

Paediatric Surgery and Paediatric Urology, Paediatric Endoscopy, Laparoscopy and Thoracoscopy

### Specialist Training

Master of Surgery (General), India  
Postdoctoral Training in Paediatric Surgery, India

Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, UK

International Fellow in Paediatric Surgery, Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, USA

Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (Paediatric Surgery), NZ/Australia

### Positions & Memberships

Consultant Paediatric Surgeon and Urologist, Waikato Hospital

Visiting Paediatric surgeon Tauranga and Thames Hospitals

Honorary Senior Clinical Lecturer, University of Auckland

Member, Australasian Association of Paediatric Surgeons

Member, New Zealand Society of Paediatric Surgeons

### Currently working at Braemar Hospital?

Yes

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24 Ohaupo Road, Hamilton  
PO Box 972, Waikato Mail Centre 3240  
Phone: 07 843 1899 | Fax: 07 834 3944