

What is Pediatrics?



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Pediatrics is the branch of medicine dealing with the health and medical care of infants, children, and adolescents from birth up to the age of 18. The word "paediatrics" means "healer of children"; they are derived from two Greek words: (pais = child) and (iatros = doctor or healer). Paediatrics is a relatively new medical specialty, developing only in the mid-19th century. Abraham Jacobi (1830–1919) is known as the father of paediatrics.

What does a pediatrician do?

A paediatrician is a child's physician who provides not only medical care for children who are acutely or chronically ill but also preventive health services for healthy children. A paediatrician manages physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the children under their care at every stage of development, in both sickness and health.

Aims of pediatrics

The aims of the study of paediatrics is to reduce infant and child rate of deaths, control the spread of infectious disease, promote healthy lifestyles for a long disease-free life and help ease the problems of children and adolescents with chronic conditions.

Paediatricians diagnose and treat several conditions among children including:-

- injuries
- infections
- genetic and congenital conditions
- cancers
- organ diseases and dysfunctions

Paediatrics is concerned not only about immediate management of the ill child

but also long term effects on quality of life, disability and survival. Paediatricians are involved with the prevention, early detection, and management of problems including:-

- developmental delays and disorders
- behavioral problems
- functional disabilities
- social stresses
- mental disorders including depression and anxiety disorders

Collaboration with other specialists

Paediatrics is a collaborative specialty. Paediatricians need to work closely with other medical specialists and healthcare professionals and subspecialists of paediatrics to help children with problems.

How does pediatrics differ from adult medicine?

Paediatrics is different from adult medicine in more ways than one. The smaller body of an infant or neonate or a child is substantially different physiologically from that of an adult. So treating children is not like treating a miniature adult.

Congenital defects, genetic variance, and developmental issues are of greater concern to pediatricians than physicians treating adults. In addition, there are several legal issues in paediatrics. Children are minors and, in most jurisdictions, cannot make decisions for themselves. The issues of guardianship, privacy, legal responsibility and informed consent should be considered in every pediatric procedure.

Training

A paediatrician is a graduate from a medical school first. He or she being a primary care paediatrician then completes three years of education in an accredited pediatric residency program. They learn about caring for infant, child, adolescent, and young adults during this period.

Following the pediatric residency, the pediatrician is eligible for board certification by the American Board of Paediatrics with successful completion of a comprehensive written examination. Recertification is required every seven years.

Subspecialties in pediatrics

Subspecialties in pediatrics include:

- pediatric cardiology
- critical care medicine
- endocrinology
- gastroenterology
- hematology
- neonatal medicine
- nephrology etc.

Sources

- <http://www.umm.edu/paediatrics/pediatrician.htm>
- medicalcenter.osu.edu/.../index.aspx
- <http://www.healthychildren.org>
- <http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/paediatrics.asp>

Further Reading

- [All Pediatrics Content](#)
- [Pediatrics Training](#)
- [Pediatric Skin Conditions](#)
- [Subspecialties of Pediatrics](#)
- [Pediatrician: Role, Education, Training, Subspecialties](#)

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Dr. Ananya Mandal is a doctor by profession, lecturer by vocation and a medical writer by passion. She specialized in Clinical Pharmacology after her bachelor's (MBBS). For her, health communication is not just writing complicated reviews for professionals but making medical knowledge understandable and available to the general public as well.