



RAFAEL BUNDOC, 2007 PHILIPPINES

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A medical doctor, a clinician and an academician who specializes in prosthetics and orthotics, Dr. Rafael Bundoc used his Eisenhower Fellowship to examine curricula at a range of U.S. medical schools. When he returned to Manila, the contacts he made during his fellowship helped him locate funding and launch the Philippine School of Prosthetics and Orthotics, the first in the country and one of only 12 in the world. The school opened during the 2011-2012 academic year, offering a five-year program leading to a Bachelor of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics. Lecturers come to the Philippines to participate in the program through Physicians for Peace, an organization that engages healthcare workers to deliver training and support to healthcare teams in underserved regions.



A highly-trained physician, Bundoc's main interest is in the field of scoliosis surgery and cervical spine surgery. His clinical practice is based at Philippine General Hospital, where he takes an active role in research involving spine surgery. Bundoc's pioneering efforts led him to establish the first and only biomechanical laboratory in the Philippines. He is also a renowned orthopedic spine surgeon and maintains a thriving private practice. He is one of the 1996 Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Awardees for Medicine (Orthopedic Surgery).

Bundoc performed a surgical first in the world by completing a Cervical Inter-Facet Distraction Decompression (CIFDD) procedure. This procedure was conceptualized by a group of surgeons with whom Bundoc met at the University of California in San Francisco, and was successfully performed on two patients with the support of American surgeons. This revolutionary technique is minimally invasive, where doctors gain access through two small (1.5 cm) incisions over the skin to deliver the implant to the desired areas of the cervical spine. Implants are placed between the facet joint (joint connecting one vertebrae to another) of the affected level of the cervical spine that would gradually distract it to open up the hole, thereby releasing and decompressing the nerve. After the procedure, the patient is relieved of painful symptoms. Bundoc is hopeful this new procedure will soon become an alternative to open disc removal or discectomy procedures for people suffering from a condition called recalcitrant cervical radiculopathy (a nerve root trapped in the cervical spine).

Of Bundoc, it has been written that "his unpredictable and exciting lectures coupled with his bursting passion to share his knowledge in orthopedics make him a very respectable figure at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine. In fact, he epitomizes the kind of physician UPCM dreams its graduates will become. With his bright mind, Dr. Bundoc could have easily left the Philippines. He was awarded numerous grants, training offers and opportunities to work abroad, but he opted to remain not only to be with his family but also to serve his country. With the increasing number of graduates who leave in search of greener pastures, he represents a minority of highly gifted physicians who choose to remain. All of his achievements are testaments on how he has become a holistic individual. He embodies the qualities of a well-rounded physician and he exemplifies the nobility of the profession. Despite the numerous awards under his name, Dr. Bundoc has not stopped reaching for greater heights."

Leaders bettering the world around them.