

“As a nurse who has spent most of his life caring for patients, it was extremely difficult when I became a patient myself. I wasn't able to move around much or help others, and needed someone to take care of me.”

Ahmad
Patient at the Limb Reconstruction Center
Gaza



26 September 2022 – It is playtime for Ahmad and his grandson as they enjoy playing football at a pitch in the Gaza Strip. They come here regularly for football and exercise. But just a few years ago, Ahmad's life looked very different. Hospital visits instead of football with his grandson occupied most of his time.

In September 2019, Ahmad slipped on the stairs in his home. He suffered a major injury, which left him in pain for years. His family rushed him to the Abu Yousif Al Najjar Hospital in Rafah city, where he was diagnosed with a complex fracture in his right leg.

“I had to undergo immediate surgery. Doctors told me that the recovery process would be long and painful, but none of us expected the pain and discomfort to last for what seemed like an eternity,” he says.

Ahmad, who's been working as a senior nurse for the past 33 years, was forced to take a break from work due to persistent pain and limited mobility. He had to rely on crutches to move around and lived with severe pain for 18 months.

"I was in so much pain and agony, not just physically but also mentally. I wasn't used to being dependent on anyone. I would always be helping others. After the accident, my life felt compromised. It was very distressing. I just wanted my normal life back," he recalls.

After numerous visits to multiple doctors yielded no results, Ahmad was advised to seek assistance at the Limb Reconstruction Centre at the Nasser Medical Complex in the Gaza Strip.

Established by the Ministry of Health and WHO in November 2019, with support from the Swiss Development Cooperation, European Union Humanitarian Aid, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Centre is the only medical centre in the Gaza Strip that offers high-quality all-inclusive treatment from initial care to surgery to rehabilitation, for patients with complex limb injuries. Thanks to support from donors, WHO has trained surgeons, physiotherapists and psychosocial support staff to introduce a multidisciplinary, patient-centred approach and provided equipment and supplies to ensure that the Centre can continue providing the highest level of care to patients.

Ahmad visited the Centre in February 2021 and finally got a diagnosis for his pain. He was suffering from a complicated non-healing fracture, which required major surgery.

"I felt hope once again. I had a shot at getting my leg and my life back," says Ahmad.

He underwent urgent surgery and stayed at the centre for almost a month, where he received specialized care, including psychological support, physiotherapy, health awareness and tailored meals to aid his recovery. Within 6 months of being discharged, he gained full mobility and no longer needed to rely on his crutches to walk.

In the Gaza Strip, where escalating and reoccurring violence and limited access to outside specialized health care creates a huge burden on the fragile health system, the Limb Reconstruction Centre is helping to provide a new lease on life for patients by preventing disabilities and amputations and also restoring dignity and hope.

"It's wonderful to have such services here as for most people leaving Gaza is just not an option. Preventing disability and helping people return to normal life has an even more profound impact in a place like this where people are already living under difficult circumstances," says Ahmad.

Today, Ahmad is back at work doing what he loves the most – helping others and can still be found on the football field in the evenings with his grandchild. He is living life to the fullest and keeping active.

on Centre Achievements

(Jan 2019 - Jun 2022)



World Health Organization

occupied Palestinian territory

ber 2019, to provide specialised care for
es, including psychosocial support



912

nts served at the
ient department



644

Surgeries
performed



7,478

Physiotherapy
sessions conducted



2,057

al health sessions
ered to patients'
families



864

Health awareness
sessions provided for
patients' families



85

Assistive devices
provided