

Mayo Clinic News Network

Title: Big Steps for Amarachi

/ Date May 2018

Intro: To run, play tag, and try the sport of basketball – those are the new activities a girl from Nigeria is looking forward to most, after a life-changing trip to Mayo Clinic. Step-by-step, doctors were able to restore her legs to normal, so that she might enjoy the simple steps that most take for granted. Here’s Dennis Douda for the Mayo Clinic News Network.

Video

Audio

Total running time [3:03]	/// VIDEO
Dr. Sems speaking	“Let’s walk right down here.”
Dennis Douda speaking	These are huge strides forward for Amarachi (ah-mah-rah-chee) Austin-Okoh. (ah-stun O-ko)
Dr. Sems speaking	“Good. Come on back.”
Dennis Douda speaking	Just six months earlier, this 11 year old from Nigeria found each step to be filled with pain. Amarachi has a condition called Blount’s disease.
Modesther Austin-Okoh speaking	“I discovered it when she was 2 years old. We wish we could have seen her walk and be like other children. Very sad. We were always crying for her.”
TITLE: Todd Milbrandt, M.D., Mayo Clinic Children’s Center Orthopedic Surgeon	“Ah, Blount’s disease is a failure of the growth plate to grow on the inside of the knee, specifically, the top part of the tibia. Her disease progressed to the point where she had severely bowed legs.”
TITLE: Amarachi Austin-Okoh, Blount’s Disease Patient	“It was very painful and hard, and, then, if people were walking a distance or something, I would start walking slower and slower, because it got harder and harder.”
Dr. Milbrandt speaking	“She came to us after having had surgeries already where she lives in Africa.”
TITLE: Modesther Austin-Okoh, Amarachi’s Mother	“They have given us hope that Amarachi is not someone who could just be abandoned.”
Dennis Douda speaking	Specialists at Mayo Clinic’s Limb Lengthening and Regeneration Clinic knew they could help by using a team approach.
Dr. Sems speaking	“There’s a lot of pre-operative planning.”
TITLE: Jane Matsumoto, M.D., Mayo Clinic Children’s Center Radiologist	“We’ve made models for him, and he likes to take them. And, we usually make him a couple models, so he can practice

	on them.”
Dennis Douda speaking	Dr. Jane Matsumoto and Dr. Jonathan Morris are co-directors of Mayo Clinic’s 3-D Anatomic Modeling Lab. Their 3-D printed models of Amarachi’s leg bones allowed essential decisions to be made in advance of surgery.
Dr. Matsumoto speaking	“So, they had to figure out how to cut the bones here to reformat them to let that growth plate grow superiorly, like it was supposed to do.”
TITLE: Jonathan Morris, M.D., Mayo Clinic Radiology /	“Here you get true-to-life size. This is this patient – not just any patient – and this is what the surgeon is going to see when he exposes the bone.”
Dennis Douda speaking	Dr. Todd Milbrandt made a cut across the long bone, the tibia, just below each knee. Dr. Andrew Sems then attached external braces called fixators. Over three months’ time, precise adjustments programmed by a computer straightened Amarachi’s legs.
Dr. Sems speaking	“If you turn this, you’ll see that it’s getting shorter and also that the bones are moving in relationship to each other very gradually. We would have her turn this every day, the exact amount, until the bones were in the exact position that we wanted them to be.”
Dr. Milbrandt speaking	“You have to now basically grow the bone and correct it at the same time.”
TITLE: S. Andrew Sems, M.D., Mayo Clinic Orthopedic Surgery	“Our cut was in this direction here. So, imagine a triangle of bone in here that’s completely new bone that she formed.”
Amarachi Austin-Okoh speaking	“I hope that people know that there’s something that can be done, so you don’t have to remain that way.”
Dr. Sems speaking	“And, did we gain height?” “She gained 9¾ inches.” “Wow.”
Modesther Austin-Okoh speaking	“I’m very happy with Mayo. I’m very happy with Dr. Sems and everybody that helped us.”
Amarachi Austin-Okoh speaking	“I’m excited now, because it has opened a whole new horizon. I can do anything and everything I want to do.”
Dennis Douda speaking	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Dennis Douda.

Anchor tag: Although excess weight was not believed to be the cause for Amarachi’s (ah-mah-rah-chee’s) condition, which started in infancy, Blount’s disease has been on the rise around the world. The increasing rate of childhood obesity is often to blame, as pressure on the ends of the bones can affect how they grow. The condition is also more common among those of African heritage.

[]

For more information, visit our website at ... [STATIONS: Per the licensing agreement, please provide a link from your station's website to <http://www.MayoClinic.org> or voice tag "MayoClinic.org" for more information.]