

CHALLENGES IN HAND SURGERY

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Preface

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Nancy McKee

Understanding Medical Decision Making in Hand Surgery

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John Myers and Steven J. McCabe

The practice of medicine takes place in an environment of uncertainty. Expected value decision making, prospect theory, and regret theory are three theories of decision making under uncertainty that may be used to help us learn how patients and physicians make decisions. These theories form the underpinnings of decision analysis and provide the opportunity to introduce the broad discipline of decision science. Because decision analysis and economic analysis are underrepresented in upper extremity surgery, the authors believe these are important areas for future research.

Perspectives on Hand Transplantation

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W.P. Andrew Lee and Vu T. Nguyen

The early experience of hand transplantation has yielded a mixture of successes and failures. No life-threatening adverse effects have been encountered from immunosuppression, yet additional medications were required in some cases with unknown long-term efficacy or side effects. Limited functional returns have been observed, but any effect of chronic rejection is too early to determine. Although the experience has confirmed the benefits of hand transplantation to patients and their families, the future of hand transplantation on a wide scale is dependent on further research to alter its risk-benefit balance.

Functional Evaluation in Children with Congenital Upper Extremity Malformations

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Emily S. Ho and Howard M. Clarke

Achieving optimal upper limb function is a priority in the management of children with congenital hand malformations. Professionals need to be well equipped to help families understand the best surgical and rehabilitative options available for their child. Our ability as professionals clearly to define and evaluate the child's optimal function will assist in achieving this balance. This article examines the existing literature to evaluate critically functional outcome studies of children with congenital upper extremity malformations and to address the challenges of defining and measuring functional outcome in this patient population.

Work-related Hand Injuries in Ontario: An Historical Perspective**485***Michel M.E. Schofield*

Worker's compensation legislation was enacted in Ontario almost 90 years ago. Workers injured on the job gave up their right to sue employers and received no-fault compensation from an independent, employer-funded body called the Workmen's Compensation Board. Three academic health sciences centers in Ontario that are recognized for their commitment to patient care, research, and education compose part of the Specialty Program network with the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). Statistical data from the WSIB database for workers with hand injuries from 1996 to 2003 show an increase in fractures from fall injuries in the group of women older than 60 that may be related to osteoporosis, a common condition in this group.

Musculoskeletal Injury Associated with Fluoroquinolone Antibiotics**495***Yasmin Khaliq and George G. Zhanel*

With the expanded use of fluoroquinolones and increasing number of reports of tendon injury linked to these agents, clinicians must be aware of the frequency and strength of this association. In the past, pefloxacin and ciprofloxacin were most frequently implicated, but tendon injury is reported with most fluoroquinolones. As many as half of patients with fluoroquinolone-associated tendinopathy experience tendon rupture, and almost one third have received long-term corticosteroids. Tendon injury is mostly reported in the lower extremities, but injury in the upper extremities, including the hand, has also been reported. Management is similar regardless of the location of the injury. Use of fluoroquinolones requires careful patient assessment and follow-up in view of this complication with potential for sequelae.

The Management of Web Space Contractures**503***Loree K. Kalliainen and Warren Schubert*

Multiple reconstructive options exist for the web space contracture: skin grafts, local flaps, and distant flaps have all been used to release the contracture and resurface the resultant defect. Local flaps are frequently more suited to web contractures between the fingers, whereas the thumb-index web space is amenable to a broader range of surgical techniques. The authors present a review of the anatomy of the web and options for reconstruction of web space contractures.

The Burned Hand: Optimizing Long-term Outcomes with a Standardized Approach to Acute and Subacute Care**515***Robert Cartotto*

Deep partial- and full-thickness burns to the hands are common and the source of significant potential morbidity for the patient. This article emphasizes that when these burns are managed by an experienced team of burn surgeons, rehabilitation therapists, and nurses, using a standardized protocol, good long-term functional outcomes may be reliably obtained in most cases. The details of the author's standardized protocol, as well as late outcomes achieved using this approach, are discussed.

Strategies for Nonrandomized Clinical Research in Hand Surgery**529***Brent Graham*

Most clinical research questions in hand surgery may be effectively explored using a variety of nonrandomized study designs. The main advantage of any of these methods is that they are almost always more feasible than a prospective randomized, controlled

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