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Selected internet viewings

Welcome to the *Annals'* regular review of what's happening on the web, what your patients are reading and what caught our eye this month.

If you wish to review web sites in your area of expertise, please E-mail your completed reviews directly to me, **Nick Cheshire**, at nickcheshire@blueyonder.co.uk. Authors must NOT submit their reviews more than once.

The editors regret that they cannot enter into correspondence with authors. It may be some months before your submission is reviewed.

Ankle replacement surgery

TIM McBRIDE

Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, Birmingham, UK

CORRESPONDENCE TO

Tim McBride, 71 North Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 9PD, UK
E: tjm607@yahoo.com

Ankle replacement surgery has been available for over two decades; however, it is a far less common procedure than hip or knee arthroplasty owing to the less frequent incidence of osteoarthritic ankle pathology. The majority of ankle osteoarthritis is secondary to trauma. Unlike idiopathic osteoarthritis this tends to occur in the younger patient. Until relatively recently, ankle joint arthrodesis was the gold standard of treatment, but this is not without its complications, e.g. non-union, osteoarthritis in the other mid/hind foot joints and stiffness and loss of proprioception. Early ankle arthroplasty prostheses had high failure rates; however, new designs and studies with longer term results have brought ankle replacement surgery into the limelight as a viable alternative for a select group of patients.

www.thefootandankleclinic.com

This web site is produced by a UK-based clinic, and provides detailed information for patients and clinicians on a wide range of foot and ankle topics. The site is user-friendly, and has an appealing layout with an easy to read and navigate menu system. It gives an informative overview of ankle anatomy and pathology including many clear pictures and X-rays. An extensive section on ankle replacement surgery details the indications, patient

selection, operative technique and peri-operative care, prostheses used, alternative treatments, and complications. An excellent feature of this website are the many video clips (freely downloadable) which show pre- and postoperative function, and even operative footage. A superb resource for patient and clinician, the website seems to grow every time you visit it; most orthopaedic foot and ankle conditions are covered.****

www.aofas.org

The American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society was founded in 1969 and provides educational opportunities for orthopaedic surgeons with a special interest in foot and ankle surgery. The web site is easy to use and provides online free abstracts from their journal *Foot and Ankle International*. The search engine is excellent and recent articles on all aspects of ankle replacement surgery including long-term joint survival, cost effectiveness and differential practice of general orthopaedic surgeons versus foot and ankle surgeons are easily accessible. Members are able to access the online journal in full, but visitors to the site are able to gain a quick scientific overview of the subject matter.***

www.jointreplacement.com

Published by DePuy Orthopaedics Inc., this website is aimed firmly at the patient. It offers a wide range of information regarding arthroplasty in general, and has an interesting visual analogue interface for browsing based around a pain scale of 1–10, if you select 1, it discusses conservative treatment, and for 10, surgical treatment! Information on the ankle begins with an overview of ankle anatomy presented with translations of the medical jargon and detailed colour pictures. Ankle replacement surgery is then discussed in pre-, intra- and postoperative sections which include detailed information about selecting a surgeon, what to expect in hospital, operative components/ technique and postoperative care. However, it does not give details of patient selection, complications, or alternative surgical treatment. Certainly not for clinicians, but a good starting place for a prospective patient.**

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus

This website from the National electronic Library for Health has an online medical encyclopaedia. It contains a brief, but informative, section on ankle replacement surgery that is predominantly aimed at the general public, but may be of some use to a junior trainee. There are no pictures or X-rays to view but the text is easy to read and

understand. The site also offers some journal references and has in-text links to other orthopaedic conditions. There is little here to interest the clinician and it is certainly not the most exciting layout for the information presented.**

www.keywood.demon.co.uk

Created by Peter Wood past-president of the British Orthopaedic Foot Surgery Society and based at Wrightington, in the UK. This website offers a comprehensive history of the development of ankle replacement surgery including an excellent list of key references from 1976 to the present, with links to online abstracts. A gallery of ankle replacement sets includes photographs of more prostheses than you ever thought existed! Following this, a section on current awareness includes a Medline search with abstracts of all recent significant papers related to the topic from April 2004 to June 2005. This is an excellent resource for quick and easy access to the latest scientific and clinical research information for any surgeon. The site also provides patient information in the form of a leaflet and some website links.*****

Hyperhydrosis

SIMON MONKHOUSE

Department of Surgery, Southampton General Hospital,
Southampton, UK

CORRESPONDENCE TO

Simon Monkhouse, Department of Surgery, Southampton General Hospital, Southampton SO16 6YD, UK
E: sjwmonkhouse@hotmail.com

www.sweatfree.org.uk

This is a very simple website designed for patients with hyperhydrosis. It gives a very brief introduction to the subject and its surgical management. It is basic and to the point and certainly benefits from a 'no frills' approach. It introduces Mr Alan Cameron who is one of the UK's leading surgeons in the field of endoscopic thoracic sympathectomy and has many useful and informative links. The simplicity of this site is refreshing and does not bombard the user with excessive and often duplicated information.****

www.sweathelp.org

This is an American website from the International Hyperhydrosis Society which caters to the individual needs of the user. It has separate information links for patients, healthcare professionals and the media. The 'patient' section is written in a non-patronising, balanced and re-assuring manner which will give the user all the necessary information. The patient with this condition is often too embarrassed to talk openly about the subject or even present to their own doctor and this site will certainly remove the stigma for them. The 'healthcare professional' section gives a

very scientific, evidence-based review of the condition. It covers physiology, pathology, psychology, epidemiology and current treatments in sufficient detail to satisfy the academic surgeon. There is also a 'media' section with press releases and published articles. This is a very flexible website which is useful for all those involved in this field. It is also available in several different languages to widen its appeal.*****

www.sweaty-palms.com

This website covers all the basic details in an easy-to-use format. It suffers from too much text and one gets the impression that this is a self advertisement for a single surgeon, Dr Rafael Reisfield. The testimonials from the patients are all one-sided with no mention of their personal side-effects of the surgery. The alternatives to surgery are mentioned briefly, but in a biased manner. There is a 'possible complications and side effects' link which, for an advertising site, is objective and honest. It even mentions a paper from a respected, peer-reviewed publication for more information on the cardiovascular side effects from surgery. There is a slide show which introduces the patient to the theatre environment but offers little more. Overall, a disappointing site.**

www.hyperhydrosis.com

A first-class, collaborative website written by various experts from around the world. It is a bright, user-friendly site that is ultimately designed for patient and clinician. The surgical section is backed up by evidence-based reports and publications which leave the user in no doubt that endoscopic thoracic sympathectomy is a safe, reliable and ultimately effective procedure. There is a unique question and answer section in which the same questions are posed to various different surgeons. It is interesting for the user to compare answers and the surgeons become instantly accessible to the user. Each sub section is balanced, objective and informative. Overall, highly recommended.*****

www.rcsed.ac.uk/journal/svol2_6/206001.html

A very nice, concise clinical review of hyperhydrosis and treatments available. It cites 50 references to validate the points that are being made. This will appeal to the clinician who wants a balanced review of the subject area. There is a 'quiz' at the end of the publication to increase interest.****

www.sympathectomy.co.uk

This website is designed for patients seeking surgical options to treat hyperhydrosis. It is well designed, attractive and simple in its format. The question and answer section is particularly useful in that it addresses a whole range of genuine concerns from scar size and side effects to cost of the procedure. The surgery link is well explained without too much emphasis on the precise anatomy and there is a downloadable video to explain further and to re-assure. There is a useful links page which gives patient perspectives and non-surgical treatments. Overall, an attractive, easy to navigate site.***