Technical Tips

Use of dental instrument in paediatric hip surgery

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It has been noted that the eversion of an inverted limbus during open reduction of a congenitally dislocated hip can be technically difficult. It is important not to traumatise the acetabular growth plate. We have found that this procedure is made easier by using a dental instrument – the ‘Ward’s dental dissector’ (Fig. 1) to elevate the limbus from the margin of the acetabulum. This is routinely used by dentists for elevation of gingival tissue.

The ‘spade-shaped end’ of the instrument is introduced into the space between the limbus and acetabular margin elevating the limbus to allow relocation of the femoral head.

Figure 1 Ward's dental dissector

Draping for shoulder surgery – a single choice

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Draping for shoulder surgery in the beach chair position can be an awkward procedure. We suggest a technique using a single

Figure 1 Set up for shoulder surgery using hip fracture fixation drape.

transparent hip fracture fixation drape. The prepared arm is placed through a hole previously cut in the central window of the drape. The adhesive area is secured around the operative site and the drape is then positioned across a bar as for hip fracture surgery (Fig. 1). Once applied, it allows the anaesthetist complete access to the patient. The drape is readily available, disposable, cheap and has a large pocket to collect excess fluid.

Describing the ‘dog ear’ – a novel method

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An elliptical skin excision can cause corners of redundant skin to rise at the apices known as ‘standing cones’ or ‘dog ears’. We describe a simple visual aid to illustrate this, which we find effective in our discussion of complications when taking pre-operative consent. Abduction of the thumb using the gap between the index finger and the thumb to represent the outline of the ellipse corner, followed by adduction as the excision margins close, raises