IMAGES IN EMERGENCY MEDICINE

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"A case of spanner in the works, removed from a finger, using a dental bur"—an "image" to be submitted to the *Emergency Medical Journal*

Removal of circumferential objects from the digits is frequently undertaken to prevent or manage tourniquet effect. We report a case of a ring spanner, defiant to remove by traditional methods, removed using a dental bur.

A NSK high speed air turbine hand piece was used with a taper coarse grit diamond bur to cut through the steel spanner (fig 1). Automatic water irrigation through the hand piece was used to prevent heat build up. The metal skin protector of a standard ring cutter was placed beneath the spanner to protect the finger when approaching the full thickness of the spanner. The spanner was divided in two locations with ease using the dental bur, and was pain free, requiring no local anaesthetic. We believe this novel method to be safe, painless, and advocate this for cases in which the circumferential object is composed of hard metal.

Figure 1 A high speed turbine hand piece with a taper coarse grit diamond bur cutting through a steel spanner

Competing interests: none declared.

Ethical consent: written consent has been obtained for publication of photographs.

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Emergency casebook

Please visit the *Emergency Medicine Journal* website (<http://emj.bmj.com/>) for links to the full text of these emergency casebooks.

Severe hypotension and hypothermia caused by acute ethanol toxicity ▶

We report the time-course and clinical features of acute ethanol poisoning in an elderly man who had previously abstained from alcohol. Several hours after ingestion, severe hypotension and hypothermia developed, and conscious level was reduced. Supportive measures were sufficient to allow the patient's blood pressure and temperature to recover 24 h post-ingestion. The clinical manifestations of ethanol toxicity are often confounded by co-existent drug ingestion, and variable periods of unconsciousness prior to arrival at hospital. This case highlights that hypotension and hypothermia may be explained on the basis of severe ethanol poisoning alone, in the absence of any other contributing factors. Clinical features of poisoning may be delayed by several hours and, therefore, patients presenting to hospital should be considered for observation for at least 4 h after consumption of potentially toxic quantities. More severe toxicity should be anticipated in patients who are normally abstinent from alcohol.

▲ Wilson E, Waring WS. Severe hypotension and hypothermia caused by acute ethanol toxicity. *Emerg Med J* 2006;24:e7. <http://emjonline.com/cgi/content/full/24/2/e7> doi: 10.1136/emj.2006.041590

Necrotising myositis: a surgical emergency that may have minimal changes in the skin

▶ Necrotising myositis is a surgical emergency. It is underappreciated that it may present without changes in the skin. Diagnosis is therefore often delayed. We describe a case of necrotising myositis necessitating glenohumeral disarticulation. Remarkable features were the absence of skin signs and the rapidity with which he became extremely septic. A review of the literature has shown the importance of early diagnosis and quick decision-making to minimise mortality.

▲ Smith GH, Huntley JS, Keenan GF. Necrotising myositis: a surgical emergency that may have minimal changes in the skin. *Emerg Med J* 2006;24:e8. <http://emjonline.com/cgi/content/full/24/2/e8> doi: 10.1136/emj.2006.041723

Not fun in the sun: playground safety in a heatwave ▶

Two patients with severe palmar burns sustained from hot playground equipment during a heatwave are presented here, with a review of the management of palmar burn injuries.

▲ Strong D, Tahir A, Verna S. Not fun in the sun: playground safety in a heatwave. *Emerg Med J* 2006;24:e9. <http://emjonline.com/cgi/content/full/24/2/e9> doi: 10.1136/emj.2006.041657

An unusual case of stroke in a young patient

▶ The patent foramen ovale has been increasingly implicated in the aetiology of stroke, particularly in young patients with no other identifiable cause (cryptogenic stroke). A case of Parinaud's syndrome secondary to thromboembolism from a patent foramen ovale is reported here.