Pulsed lavage in the orthopaedic theatre

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Figure 1 Apparatus as used.

Pulsed lavage is used routinely for orthopaedic cases and is very effective in cleaning wounds. We have found that by using a flexible plastic light handle with a small hole cut out from the base of the hand-held part fitted onto the nozzle of the pulsed lavage (Fig. 1), cleaning wounds is easier with less splash back, and it is cheaper compared to the rigid splash guards commercially available. With the flexible light handle we can also manoeuvre easily around awkwardly shaped wounds.

Improvised straight needle suture passer

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Figure 1 A 3'0 ethibond suture secured within a 19-G hypodermic needle.

Repair of soft tissue injuries often involves passage of sutures through osseous tunnels. Whilst straight needles are available, they are not offered for all types of suture materials. They also have a large diameter at the eye, necessitating a large diameter tunnel. We describe a simple and cheap way of making any suture available with a straight needle. Dunhill forceps are used to remove the hub from a hypodermic needle. Any suture material can then be passed through the lumen and secured by crimping the needle at its hilt (Fig. 1). To minimise the risk of injury, this is done without fully unsheathing the needle. We have used this technique many times with no failures.