MUTILATING ELECTROTATRAUMA - CASE REPORT

This paper from the Czech Republic reports the case of a 22-
yr-old male who was struck by electricity (voltage, 22 kV) while
working on a high-voltage overhead line tower. Primary treatment
included fasciotomies and was completed two hours after the injury
(left upper extremity, right limb). A detailed account is given of the
surgical and medical treatment, which as a result of ischaemia ulti-
mately involved amputation of the right lower extremity and the left
upper extremity below the shoulder. The patient received admirable
support from his family. Details are given of the patient’s gradual
recovery of a certain degree of physical dexterity.

Kaloudová K., Říhová H., Brychta P., Suchánek I., Kucerá I.,
Menšík I., Krupícová H., Lipový B.

SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE TREATMENT OF PATIENTS WITH MULTIPLE MECHANICAL AND BURN INJURIES

This Czech paper points out although less than 5% of burn pa-
tients suffer other traumatic injuries at the time of their accident, the
multiple traumas that may be associated create special problems dur-
ding their period of care, while the burn injury itself often compi-
cates the diagnosis and treatment. Combined mechanical and burn
injuries are of two types, i.e. associated fractures located outside or
inside the burn area. This distinction is a critical factor that has to
be considered during the course of treatment. The following options
are involved: in fractures outside the burn area, there is no differ-
ence in standard, skeletal treatment procedures, while for fractures
in burn areas (mostly on the extremities), the optimal procedure is
neurectomy and autografting, which is not always possible because of the pa-
tient’s overall condition. All these aspects have to be considered dur-
ing the decision-making process.

Klein L., Douša P., Zajcěk R., Pařugá L., Tokarík M.

CATHETER-RELATED INFECTIONS IN BURN PATIENTS AT THE BURN CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL IN OSTRAVA

Central venous catheters (CVCs) are necessary in the manage-
ment of critically ill patients with severe burns for the purpose of
administering fluids or monitoring haemodynamic status. The ap-
plication of CVCs may cause a variety of early or late complica-
tions, depending on the skill of the medical team physicians, the
quality of the catheters, and the quality of the Intensive Care Unit
nursing care. This paper from the Czech Republic reviews the re-
sults of 272 CVCs inserted 114 patients (both adult and paediatric)
between 2004 and 2006. The average duration of each insertion was
10.2 days and the average total duration of catheterization was 24
days. The total number of catheter days was 2768. All the catheter
tips were routinely cultured after removal (most frequent infecting
pathogens: coagulase-negative staphylococci) Bacterial findings
from wounds, sputum, and urine were monitored in all patients.
There were no cases of exogenous catheter sepsis, while we found
endogenous catheter colonization with positive peripheral blood cul-
ture and bacteraemia in four cases, corresponding to a rate of 1.44
endogenous colonizations per 1000 catheter days. The quality of the
catheters used and, in particular, the technique of placement and
maintenance of their placement are considered to be crucial for good
results.

Tymonová J., Adánková M., Trosíková V., Kadlíčk M., Jackanin
J., Crkvenaž Z.
Acta Chirurgiae Plasticae, 50: 23-6, 2008

ACINETOBACTER - SERIOUS DANGER FOR BURN PATIENTS

A retrospective study of infection in burn patients was carried out
in a burns clinic in Slovakia in the period 2003-2006, providing
confirmation of the increasing presence of Acinetobacter strains as
a potential multidrug-resistant pathogen. Over 270 patients are ad-
mited every year to the burns clinic with serious burn injuries, and
75 (on average) to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). In 1992 the bac-
terial strain A. baumannii began to be sporadically isolated from the
wound swabs of patients admitted to the ICU, and in 1999 there was
a rapid increase in the number of A. baumannii isolates, which showed
increasing resistance to the usual antimicrobials, without clinical man-
ifestation. In 2003, 11% of all our hospitalized patients were colo-
nized with A. baumannii, while in 2004 the figure for ICU patients
was 10%. Wound colonization was confirmed in 17 patients in 2006,
while three patients developed sepsis, five had urinoinfection, two con-
tracted pneumonia, and seven had serious wound infections. A. bau-
mannii resistance significantly increased after 2003, before the intro-
duction of effective antibiotics to counteract it. We first observed
multidrug-resistant A. baumannii in 2006 in eight patients (11%),
two of whom died of sepsis. As a consequence we initiated surveil-
ance of A. baumannii. The purpose of our investigation was to de-
fine the epidemiology of the outbreak and to determine the risk fac-
tors for colonization or infection with A. baumannii.

Babík J., Bodnárová L., Sopko K.

INTERNATIONAL ABSTRACTS
OBITUARY

Maddalena Ferrara
Member of the Executive Committee of MBC

Dear Maddalena
To remember you and talk about you is not a hard task because you lived a full and intense life.

You pursued your professional career with great determination and dedication, with numerous brilliant results.

You were born in Palermo on 9 September 1947 and you graduated in Medicine and Surgery at Palermo University with the maximum mark of 110 out of 110 with distinction.

In 1974 you took your Specialization in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Padua University with the mark of 70 out of 70; in 1978 your specialization in Dentistry and Maxillofacial Surgery; and in 1982 your specialization in Food Sciences, in each case with maximum marks.

From 1976 to 2005 you worked in the Division of Plastic Surgery and Burns Therapy of Palermo Civic Hospital in the positions of Assistant, Joint Registrar, First Level Medical Director, and Head of Division, with regard to which last position I must draw attention to the fine example of leadership and management that you set to all your colleagues.

In 1998 you were put in charge of Pathological Congenital Malformations and Osteointegrated Facial Epistheses, and I am sure that all those little malformed faces will always remember how you helped to return their smile.

In the Division you were a splendid example of reliability, professional competence, and humanity and you were consequently much respected and admired by all the staff.

After your retirement from the Hospital in 2005, you continued your professional activity in the Progresso Medico private medical facility.

In 1976 you became a Member of the Italian Society of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery; in 1979 a Permanent Member of the International Society of Burn Injuries; in 1983 a Member of the Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters; and in 1985 a Member of the Italian Burns Society.

Your teaching activity was intense, reaching distinguished levels in the framework of dissemination programmes and on extraoral implantology and facial epistheses.

You participated as a Staff Member in projects such as COMET, Tempus, Leonardo, and BURNET, all of great value at international level in the sector of the dissemination of teaching and training activities in the field of burns and fire disasters.

You participated in numerous Master’s degree classes and training courses.
You presented scientific papers at conferences and congresses.
You produced as many as 75 articles published in national and international journals as well as 18 videotapes.

In 1973 you married Professor Michele Masellis and, at his side, you were truly a great woman – with regard to your union, never has the saying been more true that “beside every important man there is always a great woman”. A watchful and ever-present mother, you brought up your three splendid children, Simona, Alessandro, and Massimiliano, and you were the affectionate grandmother of three grandchildren.

With great intelligence and skill you succeeded in combining your important role as a woman with the busy activity of a doctor.

You departed this life suddenly and prematurely on 27 March 2009, but people like yourself who succeed in constructing such a vast treasure of culture, professional skill, and humanity never really leave us.

You were, and always will be, one of us.

With a warm embrace from me and from all your colleagues.

Michela Amico