

# NEW DIMENSIONS IN OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY

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## HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

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# CONTENTS

- The significance of Langerhans cells in cholesteatoma  
*B. Åberg, G. Heyden, M. Jontell, S. Edström and A. Tjellström* 1
- Subperiosteal abscess complicating chronic otitis media  
*S.M. Ahmadizadeh* 3
- Otomycosis in Karachi  
*M.H.A. Beg and A.T. Bukhari* 5
- Nonspecific necrotizing petrositis in children  
*A.C. Stam and J.A. Pinto* 7
- Autoradiographic studies of mineral transport from regions of bone resorption in experimental cholesteatoma  
*R.A. Chole and S.P. Tinling* 9
- Sensorineural hearing loss in chronic otitis media patients treated topically with ear drops  
*M. Fradis, J. Ben-David, L. Podoshin and B. Bashara* 11
- Results of treatment of otosclerosis with platinum teflon piston and partial stapedectomy  
*T. Brask* 13
- J. Bernard Causse technique for otosclerosis surgery  
*J.B. Causse and J.R. Causse* 16
- Changes in bone conduction threshold during stapedectomy  
*V. Colletti and V. Ricci* 18
- Altered bone remodelling in otosclerosis  
*O. Ribári and I. Sziklai* 21
- Paracusis Willisii, tale or true?  
*J. Suonpää, E. Pekkarinen and A. Salmivalli* 23
- Otosclerosis - Association with HLA BW 35  
*J.M. Tato, E.J. Haas, E.H. Raimondi and L. Verruno* 25
- Interest of the tomographic study of the vestibular aqueduct  
*J.M. Bertran and M. Trujillo* 27
- Modification of the uvulopalatoplasty operation resulting in decreased incidence of velopharyngeal incompetence and postop recurrence of obstructive sleep apnea syndrome  
*H.L. Baker* 29
- Vestibular neurectomy for Meniere's disease. Middle fossa or retrolabyrinthine approach?  
*J. Gavilan, C. Gavilan and M.D. Tomas* 31
- Retrolabyrinthine vestibular neurectomy with simultaneous monitoring of eighth nerve and brain stem auditory evoked potentials  
*H. Silverstein, A.B. McDaniel, J. Wazen and H. Norrell* 33
- Results of vestibular nerve section and neurolysis of the eighth cranial nerve in Meniere's disease  
*T. Haid, M.E. Wigand and M. Berg* 35

- Pupillary dynamics in patients with Meniere's disease  
*H. Inoue, T. Uemura and T. Matsunaga* 38
- Intratympanic treatment with gentamicin for Meniere's disease  
*G. Lange* 39
- An epidemiological study of Meniere's disease in Toyama prefecture  
*K. Mizukoshi, Y. Watanabe, N. Ohashi, H. Kobayashi and H. Shojaku* 41
- Gentamycin-treated Meniere's disease evaluated by rotatory tests  
*L. Ödkvist, C. Möller, J. Thell, B. Larsby and D. Hydén* 43
- Hyperinsulinism associated with migraine and Meniere's disease  
*F.W. Pullen II, R. Low, L. Pearce and T. Troost* 45
- The use of histamine in the management of Meniere's disease  
*J. Said and Aguayo* 47
- Distended membranous labyrinth in cases of congenital anomalies  
*H. Saito and M. Furuta* 49
- Medical care and treatment for Meniere's disease: Method to evaluate their efficacy  
*K. Tokumasu, A. Salto and S. Yoneda* 51
- Portable cranio-carpography – A new screening method for vertigo  
*S.S. Bhutada* 53
- Non-neoplastic supraglottic laryngeal stricture of adult onset  
*M.L. Schwartz and H.T. Cho* 56
- Laryngotracheoplasty with long-term stenting in the treatment of laryngotracheal stenosis  
*Shiann Yann Lee* 59
- Glottographic measurement of the effects of laryngeal paralysis:  
 A preliminary report  
*R.R. Karin, D.G. Hanson, B.R. Gerratt, P.H. Ward and S.M.J. Hunt* 61
- Silicone injection for the unilateral paralysis of the vocal cord  
*S. Kitahara* 63
- A new classification of upper airway stenosis  
*H. Laccourreye, J. Lacau St Guily, D. Brasnu, F. Chabolle and A. Fabre* 65
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs in otitis media with effusion  
*S.M. Abramovich, J. O'Grady, A. Fuller, R. Lavelle and M. MacKinnon* 68
- Electrocochleography and brain stem potentials in herpes zoster (Ramsay-Hunt syndrome)  
*S.J. Abramovich and D.K. Prasher* 70
- Anatomical factors that affect the congenital cholesteatoma of a fetus temporal bone  
*K. Aimi* 72
- Psychological aspects of labyrinthine patients  
*A.M. Baccari Kuhn* 74
- Autograft and homograft TORP and PORP in the restoration of the middle ear  
*C. Betow* 76

- Otitis media with effusion, diagnostic and therapeutic elements  
*W. Betow* 78
- Reversible unilateral sudden hearing loss in acquired latent syphilis  
*M. Harell and M. Englander* 80
- Technique for evaluating the installation and acute cochlear injury from electrode insertion in human temporal bone preparations  
*P.A. Burgio* 82
- Office management of malignant otitis externa  
*I. Harris* 85
- Possible utility of 40 Hz event related potential in electric response audiometry  
*M. Aoyagi, M. Yokota and J. Harada* 87
- Synaptic alterations in the acoustic cortex of the rat following insulin hypoglycemia  
*S.J. Baloyannis, T.C. Theoharides and L.S. Manolides* 89
- First dialysis' bedside recording of brainstem auditory evoked responses (BAERs)  
*A. Battistella, B. di Paolo, T. di Marco, G. del Rosso and M. Evangelista* 91
- Clinical and experimental studies in secretory otitis media  
*J.A. Khan* 93
- Hearing evaluation with the combination of transtympanic electrocochleography and brain stem responses audiometry  
*P.L. Coser and M.J.S. Coser* 99
- Changes of stapedius reflex parameters during controlled stimulation  
*S. Sciuto, P. Gracili and M. Poerio* 101
- The acoustic function of the tragus  
*M. Honda, S. Tsukahara, I. Ohtani and J. Ouchi* 103
- Simultaneous multifrequency tympanometry using Fourier transforms of broadband noise  
*V.D. Larson, D.M. Schwartz and J.D. Harmon* 105
- Auditory brainstem response recovery functions in multiple sclerosis  
*J.F. Leffingwell and S.J. Kramer* 107
- High-frequency audiometry in clinical practice  
*I.W.S. Mair and E. Laukli* 109
- Clinical application of summing potentials in the diagnosis of inner ear diseases  
*T. Ohashi, N. Yoshie and K. Shimada* 111
- Dust produced deafness - An entity in the industrial complex in comparison to noise induced deafness  
*S.S. Bhutada* 113
- Prevention of sensorineural deafness  
*D. Dimov and T. Shirov* 116
- The understanding of running speech without lipreading by multi-channel cochlear prosthesis patients  
*T.J. Redhead, R.C. Dowell, G.M. Clark, A.M. Brown, B.C. Pyman and R.L. Webb* 120
- Differential diagnosis of sensory-neural hearing loss  
*L.H. Hiranandani* 122

- Topographic recording of auditory brainstem response  
*K. Shimada, T. Ohashi and N. Yoshie* 124
- Relationship between auditory brainstem response abnormalities and pure-tone audiometry  
*T. Yagi, S. Baba, Y. Kobayashi and H. Aoki* 126
- Presence of immunoglobulins (IgA, IgG) and secretory component in the human endolymphatic sac  
*W.J. Arnold and H.J. Altermatt* 128
- Assessment of the vestibular function in experimental animals by the recording of short latency vestibular evoked response  
*J. Elidan, J. Lin and V. Honrubia* 130
- Individual projections of the semicircular canal cristae in the vestibular nuclei of the frog  
*V. Honrubia, A. Kuruvilla, C. Suarez and S. Sitko* 132
- The effect of aspirin on the concentrations of prostaglandins in the perilymph  
*T.T.K. Jung, S.K. Juhn, T. Morizono, J. Edlin and D. Hwang* 34
- Staphylococci in acute otitis media  
*P. Karma, T. Virtanen, P. Gronroos and E. Herva* 136
- Histopathologic study of polyvalent pseudomonas vaccine on experimental pseudomonas otitis media  
*Chond Sun Kim, Kyung Kyun Oh and Man Kee Paik* 138
- Mast cell degranulation may cause neuronal degeneration  
*T.C. Theoharides, S.J. Baloyannis and L.S. Manolides* 140
- Paget's disease of the temporal bone  
*G. Morello-Castro* 142
- The fibrinolytic enzyme in carrageenin-induced otitis media of guinea pig  
*H. Nakayoshi, Y. Noda, M. Nakamura and T. Kosugu* 150
- Experimental studies on the amplitude modulated electrical stimulation of the ear in cats  
*Kwan Taek Noh, Soon Jae Hwang, Sun O Chang and Duk Hwan Lim* 153
- Some considerations on the pathophysiology of Meniere's disease -  
 On the relations between the clinical experiences and the results of the experimental endolymphatic hydrops  
*M. Nozue, H. Mineta, Y. Serizawa, K. Fujikawa, Y. Mori and T. Kikawada* 155
- A study using the ABR test in guinea pigs with inner ear membrane lymphatic hydrops  
*Wang Qi and K.J. Lee* 157
- The effect of labyrinthectomy on the structure of the endolymphatic sac  
*H. Rask-Andersen and U. Friberg* 159
- A microanalysis study on human auditory ossicles  
*J.M. Sánchez-Fernández, J.M. Rivera and J.A. Zubillaga* 161
- The morphology of the normal ossicles  
*L.Z. Szabo* 163
- Scanning electron microscopy of cochlear blood vessels  
*T. Tono, T. Nagai and T. Morimitsu* 165
- The effect of hemodilution by dextran on the cochlear blood flow  
*E. Hultcrantz, A.F. Nuttall, F. Scheibe and J.M. Miller* 167

- Effect of vanadate on cochlea and its distribution  
*T. Nakano, T. Morimitsu and M. Ide* 169
- On the use of homograft treating ozena  
*C. Betow* 171
- Epistaxis: Association of methods in posterior tamponement  
*S. Castagno, R.L. Castagno and L.A. Castagno* 173
- Valve phenomenon in nasal obstruction  
*G. Corvera, J. Corvera and C.S. Castillo* 175
- Electron microscopic study of scleroma in India  
*S. Desasouza and A.R. Chitale* 177
- Microsurgical treatment for posterior epistaxis  
*V. Diamante, I. Lazaro, L. Barbon and G. Haedo* 179
- New concepts in scleroma management  
*M.E. El Mallah, A.A. Haroon, S.H. El-Tayeb and R.Y. Khalil* 181
- An environmental study in rhinoscleroma  
*D.K. Gosavi, V. Gosavi and A.G. Bhavthankar* 183
- Ceramics in reconstructive surgery of the anterior skull base and the facial bones  
*K. Jahnke* 185
- Intranasal surgery with the carbon dioxide laser  
*R.A. Kirschner, B.C. McDonnell and R.F. Giuliano* 187
- A morphologic and immunohistochemical study on the effect of parasympathetic fiber neurectomy on nasal mucosa  
*V. Diamante, L. Barbon, C. Falasca, I. Lazaro, E. Mareso and S. Montes* 189
- Nasal cryotherapy with carbon dioxide  
*E.A. Lourenço and C.I. Ribeiro de Almeida* 191
- Cryosurgery: A new therapy for rhinoscleroma  
*A. Maher, S. Zaki and S.M. Hammam* 193
- Osteoplastic widening of the nasal passages  
*S.S. Parulekar* 195
- Rhinoscleroma: Contribution to its treatment  
*F. Salaverry and H. Diaz* 197
- Osteolytic sinusitis and pneumomediastinum: Deceptive otolaryngologic complications of cocaine abuse  
*V.G. Schweitzer* 200
- Epidemiologic, clinical and histological study of rhinoscleroma  
*S. Suarez Gutierrez* 204
- Treatment of allergic and vasomotor rhinitis by bilateral partial inferior turbinectomy  
*K.B. Bhargava, G.N. Shirali, U.S. Abhyankar and K.C. Gadre* 206
- A double-blind, comparative efficacy and safety study of tazifylline, clemastine and placebo in patients with seasonal allergic rhinitis; A two-centre study  
*E. Holopainen, B. Grahne, H. Malmberg, Y. Allas, M. Sorri and P. Sipilä* 208
- Effect of in vivo treatment with gammaglobulin-histamine in sensitized guinea pigs  
*M. Irifune, T. Harada, S. Ogino, I. Okawachi and T. Matsunaga* 210

## A study of allergens in nasobronchial allergy

*S.N. Jain* 212

## Dynamics of mast cells in human allergic nasal epithelial layer after provocation with allergen

*S. Kawabori, M. Okuda and T. Unno* 214

## Survey of airborne allergic pollens in North China

*Li Wu-kung and Wang Chang-sheng* 216

## Comparative study of standard X-ray, sinuscopy and B-mode echography in the diagnosis of the maxillary sinusitis (about 270 sinuses)

*B. Bertrand and J.P. Trigaux* 219

## Experimental acute pneumococcal sinusitis in rabbits - A new way for research in sinusitis

*B. Drettner, P. Johansson, J. Kumlien and H. Schiratzki* 222

## Sinusitis in a group of organ transplant recipients

*S.D. Harris, G.E. Peters and S.K. Copeland* 224

## Intranasal microsurgery of all paranasal sinuses, the septum and lacrimal sac in hypotension - 25 years experience

*J. Heermann* 226

## Modified intranasal antrostomy

*K.K. Sharan* 228

## Aspects of pronase treatment on chronic sinusitis - III Penetration into sinus tissue of orally administered pronase

*M. Ishida, H. Uda, S. Fujisaki, K. Saito and T. Nakamura* 231

## Radically operated sinusitis of the sphenoidal sinus

*O. Palmgren and B. Grahne* 233

## Modified and codified sonotubometry

*B. Friberg, I. Melén and L. Olén* 235

## Topical use of tobramycin, gentamicin, neomycin + polymyxin B, dexamethasone and lidocaine in the treatment of otitis

*M.M. Gananca and P.L.M. Albernaz* 237

## Cochleo-vestibular findings in the familial lateral amyotrophic sclerosis (Van Laere's disease)

*C.C.T. Atherino, J.P. Mattos and T. Atherino* 239

## Reconstructive of the middle-ear with hydroxyapatite implants

*J.J. Grote* 241

## Cholesteatoma in chronic suppurative otitis media with central perforation

*M.N. Jamal* 243

## Recurrent cholesteatoma of the infratemporal fossa

*R.T. Yuko and D. Blakeslee* 245

## Bacteriology of cholesteatoma

*M.J. Levenson, S.C. Parisier and W. Zelman* 248

## Clinical results with bone-anchored hearing aids

*G. Lidén, A. Tjellström and N. Berlinger* 250

## Staging of cholesteatoma

*Chiang-Feng Lien* 252

## A comparative study of pressure equalizing tubes

*E. Madieto Jr* 254

- T-tube for long-term middle ear ventilation  
*L.H. Nielsen and G. Hessel-Andersen* 256
- Deep neck abscess of otogenic origin: Bezold's abscess revisited  
*E. Smouha, V.K. Anand, M.J. Levenson, M.D.F. Deck and S.C. Parisier* 258
- Cholesteatoma - An epidemiological study among members of kibbutzim in northern Israel  
*L. Podoshin, M. Fradis, Y. Ben-David, A. Margalit, A. Tamir and L. Epstein* 260
- Ear disease in the Australian aborigine  
*A.B.N. Rao* 262
- Athanikar's hypothetical modification of facial nerve decompression based on reticulometry  
*K.A. Athanikar* 264
- Cranial nerve alterations during Bell's palsy  
*R.F. Bento, A. Miniti and A.J. Tedesco-Marchese* 266
- Facial nerve tumors  
*O. Gomes de Souza* 268
- Clinical evidence of CNS involvement in Bell's palsy  
*P. Hanner, O. Andersen, L. Frisen, U. Rosenhall and S. Edström* 270
- Surgical anatomy of the facial nerve. Identification techniques for avoiding its lesion  
*M.A. Lacour, G. Baldisserotto and V. Thompson* 271
- Sub mandibular salivary gland scan: A prognostic indicator of Bell's palsy. A preliminary report  
*G. Rosen, I.Y. Vered, I. Garty* 274
- The facial motor nucleus somatotopy is restored after facial nerve regeneration in neonatal but not adult rats  
*L. Thomander and H. Aldskogius* 277
- Response pattern recognition in facial evoked electromyography (electroneurography)  
*G.B. Hughes, R.H. Nodar and M.A. Hamid* 279
- Experiences in motion sickness prevention  
*G. Bodó* 281
- Clinical evaluation of the inferior vestibular nerve function  
*H.H. Caovilla, M.M. Gananca and P.L.M. Albernaz* 283
- Can the chair test determine the side of vestibular dysfunction?  
*M.A. Hamid, G.B. Hughes and M.O'Keefe* 285
- Investigation into the precision of Barany's theory of caloric labyrinthine reaction  
*H.J. Scholtz and U. Sievert* 287
- Non-vestibular contamination of rotatory testing for vestibular diagnosis  
*D. Hydén, B. Larsby and L. Ödkvist* 289
- The fast phase eye-speed of post caloric nystagmus in normals: A vector-nystagmographic study  
*Y.I. Ito, M.M. Gananca and P.L.M. Albernaz* 291
- Effects of visual target on body sway  
*M. Kikukawa, Y. Miyashita and K. Taguchi* 293



- Quantitative measurement of visual vestibulo-ocular interaction using sinusoidal rotation in patients with vertigo  
*H. Kobayashi, K. Mizukoshi, Y. Watanabe and N. Ohashi* 295
- Change in vestibular-oculomotor function due to transdermally applied scopolamine  
*B. Larsby, J. Thell, D. Hydén and L. Ödkvist* 297
- Optokinetic nystagmus in patients with cerebral lesions  
*M. Yanagida, T. Tokita, K. Amano and K. Mizuta* 299
- Haemostatic study in patients with vertigo and the effect of antiplatelet drug  
*Y. Noda, M. Ura, M. Nakamura and T. Kosugi* 301
- Quantification of smooth pursuit patterns (between smooth, saccadic and ataxic patterns)  
*N. Ohashi, Y. Watanabe, H. Kobayashi and K. Mizukoshi* 304
- Diazepam in the treatment and prevention of motion sickness  
*J.H. Ryu and R.I. Kohut* 306
- Positional vertigo - Treatment with ephedrine nasal douche  
*K.U. Shah* 309
- Clinical significance of change in angulation of shoulders while stepping  
*K. Taguchi, K. Wada and M. Kikukawa* 312
- Immunohistochemical study of cochlear cells using monoclonal keratin antibody AE1  
*Shan-Rong Shi and S.K. Juhn* 314
- Studies of the development of the otic capsule in rats  
*K. Shimada* 317
- Surgical anatomy of the guinea pig middle ear  
*D.S. Thakor and T.W. Frank* 320
- Propranolol's effect on auditory-nerve responses is due to its local anesthetic properties  
*R.P. Wikholm and M.L. Wiederhold* 322
- Motility of isolated mammalian outer hair cells  
*H.P. Zenner* 324
- Growth of frontal sinus with age - An X-ray tomographic study  
*Y. Arashi, T. Mabuchi and M. Tsutsumi* 326
- The ultrastructure of the human antral mucosa in chronic sinusitis. A freeze-fracture study  
*R. Aust, A. Köling and H. Rask-Andersen* 328
- The safety of frontal sinus fat obliteration when sinus walls are missing  
*P.J. Donald and M. Ettin* 330
- Aspects of protease treatment of chronic inflammation. II. Role and fate of administered protease  
*S. Fujisako, T. Nakamura, S. Kurokawa, M. Mitani, J. Yoshida and M. Nakamura* 332
- Clinical significance of EOG (Electro-olfactogram) for the objective olfactory examination  
*M. Kamide, M. Furukawa and R. Umeda* 334
- Amidolytic and fibrinolytic activity of tissue plasminogen activator from paranasal mucous membrane in chronic sinusitis  
*T. Kosugi, M. Ura and Y. Noda* 336

- Electronmicroscopic histochemistry of the serous secretory granules in the human nasal and salivary glands  
*M. Machino, M. Tachibana, M. Hirayama, H. Hama and O. Mizukoshi* 339
- Preliminary observations on mediators in rhinovirus-induced colds  
*Kagey-Sobotka, D. Bartenfelder, P. Beasley, L. Lichtenstein and D. Proud* 341
- Quantitative analysis of sialic acid and L-fucose in patients with chronic sinusitis or nasal allergy  
*K. Ogawa, K. Itoh, A. Uchizoni and M. Ohyama* 343
- Comparative histochemical study of glycoconjugates of nasal and paranasal mucosa in mammalian  
*K. Tanaka, K. Fukami and M. Ohyama* 345
- Immunohistochemical and biochemical study of complement in nasal and paranasal diseases  
*A. Uchizono, Y. Hanamura, S. Furuta and M. Ohyama* 347
- Absorbance spectrophotometric analysis for the mucous membrane in nasal and paranasal sinus diseases  
*H. Yano, S. Furuta, S. Yashikawa and M. Ohyama* 349
- Morphological bases of echolocation in the bat: *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*  
*J. Slocker, L. Cabezudo, J. Antoli-Candela and F. Antoli-Candela* 351
- Comparative analysis of tissue alterations found in the tonsil beds of dogs operated through conventional surgery or using CO<sub>2</sub> laser  
*M. Elisabetsky, L.C. Da Costa Gayotto, J.B. Ferreira and E.P. Neto* 355
- A new technique for total septal reconstruction in children  
*S.B. Jugo and I.F. Padovan* 357
- Correction of nasal septal perforation through external rhinoplasty approach  
*W.H. Abousheleb and H.M. Moustafa* 359
- Predicting success of surgical treatment in obstructive sleep apnea  
*V.K. Anand, M. Kramer and L. Schoen* 361
- Surgical management of ear lobe keloids secondary to ear piercing using a newer compression device  
*H.L. Baker and R. Baugh* 363
- Facial reconstruction with implants of porous polyethylene  
*A. Berghaus* 365
- Serial excision in management of facial scars and keloids  
*H.N. Bhatnagar* 3367
- Parotid gland surgery: A twenty-five year experience at Baylor College of Medicine  
*B.R. Alford, C.D. Katz and J.H. Atkins Jr* 370
- The role of radiotherapy in treatment of malignant tumors of the trachea  
*M.E. Baraka* 372
- Surgical salvage after high-dose irradiation failure in patients with head and neck cancer  
*G.A. Carl, J.A. Duncavage, R.J. Toohill and T.W. Grossman* 374
- Parallel histologic margins for head and neck cancer  
*T.M. Davidson, P. Haghighi and R.W. Astarita* 376
- Cervical metastasis from the urinary bladder: A rare diagnosis  
*D. Edelstein, W. Lawson and M. Tannenbaum* 379

- Appraisal of fine needle aspiration biopsy of cervical metastases  
*U. Engzell* 381
- Scintiscanning of low grade malignancies of the parotid gland  
*S. Haraguchi, Y. Murakami, T. Maruyama, H. Tateno, A. Fujimura and Y. Urao* 383
- Enteral nutrition in head and neck cancer surgery  
*J.H. Hill, N.A. Lygizos, E.C. Deutsch, R. Corrigan, I. Lake and E.L. Applebaum* 386
- Phonatry fistuloplasty in laryngectomy  
*D.J. Algaba, A. Zulueta, J.J. Camacho and J.C. Vea* 388
- Verrucous carcinoma of the larynx  
*R. Avellaneda, M. Alvarez-Buylla, R.M. Avellaneda and J. Traserra* 390
- Enigma of post-radiation oedema and residual or recurrent carcinoma of the larynx and laryngopharynx  
*S. Bahadur and S.K. Kacker* 392
- Etiology and management of pharyngeal fistulae following laryngectomy  
*S. Bahadur and S.K. Kacker* 395
- Speech results of Brandenburg's neoglottic procedure  
*J.H. Brandenburg, D.M. Bless and B. Salinsky* 398
- Chondronecrosis of the larynx  
*F.L. McNelis* 400
- Vocal cord augmentation: Characteristics of collagen vs teflon in the canine larynx  
*R.J. Feder, S.A. Geller, R. Kassel, R. Mertens and A.S. Lavorato* 402
- Neo-larynx (A new operation)  
*P. Ghosh* 404
- Systemic complications of acute epiglottitis  
*C. Gonzalez, J.C. Gartner, M.L. Casselbrant and M.A. Kenna* 406
- Pharyngeal constrictor myotomy and speech rehabilitation of the laryngectomy patient  
*J. Henley and C.R. Souliere Jr* 408
- Laryngeal dynamics in dysarthric speech  
*H. Hirose, S. Niimi and M. Sawashima* 411
- Acute laryngeal trauma  
*E.E. Jacobs, W.W. Montgomery and W.G. Lavelle* 413
- Jitter characteristic of voice production after Amatsu tracheoesophageal shunt operation  
*M. Kinishi and M. Amatsu* 415
- High frequency jet ventilation: A useful technique for endoscopy and surgery of the airway  
*G. Renner, G. Love and H. Ferrari* 417
- Endoscopic laser arytenoidectomy  
*R. Y. Lim* 419
- The solution in functional rehabilitation after destruction of the larynx: The tracheostoma closed  
*R. Meyer* 421
- Revised silicone tracheal T-tube (safe-T-tube)  
*W.W. Montgomery* 425

- Laser surgery in tracheal obstruction  
*J.J.M. van Overbeek, E.Th. Edens and P.E. Hoeksema* 427
- Ossicular arthroplasty  
*G.D. Albers* 428
- Middle ear silicone sheeting in Type I tympanoplasties  
*C.C.T. Atherino* 430
- The use of pre-sculpted homologous cartilage transplants in ossicular replacement  
*R.A. Chole* 432
- The substitution of the ear-drum with cornea transplant  
*M. Corradi and D. Vorosmarthy* 434
- Double flap tympanoplasty  
*L.F.P. Demoura* 436
- Techniques for the reconstruction of radical cavities  
*R. Filipo, M. Barbara and E. de Seta* 438
- Closure of non-marginal tympanic perforations using ventilating tubes  
*G.N. Georgopoulos* 439
- Ear cartilage palisade tympano-epitympanum-, antrum- and mastoid-plasties with hypotension - 10000 cases  
*J. Heermann* 440
- Incus interposition  
*M. Jalisi* 442
- Statistical analysis of results in various types of ossiculoplasties  
*S.K. Kacker* 446
- 'Widfield' mastoidotympanoplasty  
*K.J. Lee and K.E. Lee* 449
- Miringoplasty: 100 cases of experience and results  
*A. Morello, G. Morello and G. Castro* 451
- Can chronic exposure to 'civilized noise' have an effect on hearing?  
*M.V. Goycoolea, H.G. Goycoolea, C.R. Farfan, L.G. Rodriguez and G.C. Martinez* 453
- Diagnostic and treatment management of malignant external otitis (MEO)  
*V. Diamante, G. Haedo, D. Orfila and I. Faerman* 456
- Surgical treatment of glomus tumors - Techniques and results  
*M.J. Holliday, N.E. Nachlas, D.W. Kennedy and G.T. Nager* 458
- Classification of inner ear anomalies by high resolution CT-scanning of the temporal bone  
*M. Isono, K. Murata and F. Ohta* 460
- Otologic involvement in Histiocytosis X  
*D.W. Kennedy, G.T. Nager, A. Shikhani and W. Zinkham* 462
- Positional nystagmus in normal subjects - Electronystagmographic study  
*L. Lavinsky* 464
- Study of the labyrinthine function and psychomotricity in the severely deaf  
*L. Lavinsky* 466
- Acute air-way obstruction in the paediatric age-group  
*S. Mahindra, G. Sahoo, M.A. Mehar and R.K. Bhagat* 468
- Quantitative and qualitative diagnoses of children with voice disorders  
*M.F. Pedersen, S. Møller, K. Eriksen and U. Søndergaard* 470

## Laser application in otolaryngology

*Wang Qi* 472

## Severe trauma of the trachea, pharynx and larynx

*J.F. De la Rosa, R. Cardona, F. Gonzalez, C. Galvez and R. MacDonald* 474Complications of CO<sub>2</sub> laser surgery in laryngology: 1992 cases*J. Abitbol* 478

## New tracheostoma flap valve for surgical speech reconstruction

*W. Singh* 480

## Voice prostheses: Surgery, evaluation and results

*H.-P. Zenner, I.F. Herrmann and H. Pfrang* 482

## Mucormycosis with rhino-orbital and cerebral involvement

*O.L. Mendonça Cruz, E.S. Haron, E. Genta and L.J. Paiva* 484

## The external fronto-ethmoidal approach

*A. Pech, M. Zanaret, J.-M. Thomassin, J.-M. Triglia and M. Cannoni* 486

## Centro facial approach for the surgical treatment of juvenile angiofibroma

*J.R. Arrieta, J. Corvera, M.A. Garcia and A. Chi* 488

## Inverted follicular keratosis of the nasal vestibule

*J.P. Corey and G.G. Keyes* 490

## Juvenile nasopharyngeal angiofibroma (JNA) in Syria

*M.A. Hajjar* 492

## Extensive nasopharyngeal angiofibroma with intracranial involvement

*M.H. Kheradpir* 494

## Nasopharyngeal angiofibroma. Recent advances in topodiagnosis and treatment

*J.A. Pinto and A.F. Neto* 497

## Asthma and nasal polyps

*G.A. Settipane, D.E. Klein and M.D. Leks* 499

## Microsurgical sphenoidectomy

*H. Silverstein and A.B. McDaniel* 501

## Ectopic meningioma of the nose and paranasal sinuses

*C.C.T. Atherino, R. Garcia and L.J. Lopes* 503

## Juvenile nasopharyngeal angiofibroma (JNA). Microsurgical approach in 25 cases as unique treatment

*A.E. Terzian and C. Naconecy* 505

## Inner ear lesions and optokinetic nystagmus

*S. Takemori, Y. Seki and T. Aiba* 507

## A new metabolic approach to headache and dizziness

*W.R. Updegraff* 509

## Some analyses on stabilograms with loading techniques

*H. Wakutani, M. Kishimoto, H. Machizuka, H. Mori, T. Inamori and T. Kumoi* 511

## Localization of brainstem lesions by combined use of optokinetic nystagmus and fixation-suppression of caloric nystagmus

*J. Watanabe, I. Kato, T. Nakamura, K. Harada, T. Hasegawa, R. Kanayama and Y. Koike* 513

## Differential diagnosis of cerebellopontine angle neurinomas

*H. Yamaguchi and Y. Yoshimoto* 515

- Clinical and statistical observations on acoustic tumors with sudden deafness  
*Y. Yoshimoto and H. Yamaguchi* 517
- Tympanic thermometry in caloric tests  
*A. Zuñiga and A. Zuñiga* 519
- Sensorineural hearing loss in hypothyroidism  
*M.K. Agarwal and O.P. Gupta* 521
- Tinnitus: A clinical study  
*L.A. Castagno and S. Castagno* 523
- Comparative results of tinnitus. Treatment by mesotherapy and electrostimulation  
*H. Martin and C. Marcopoulos* 525
- Temporary relief of severe tinnitus by transcutaneous electrotherapy  
*B. Meyer, D. Maridat, C. Beyrand and F. Chabolle* 528
- Severe hypersomnia and sleep apnea caused by foods  
*S. Hoover* 531
- The role of hydrogen peroxide-induced histamine release from human basophils  
*H. Ogasawara, T. Fujitani and E. Middleton Jr* 535
- Clinical effect of new anti-allergic drug, tranilast, in nasal allergy  
*S. Ogino, I. Okawachi, T. Harada, M. Irifune and T. Matsunaga* 537
- The running nose. Its treatment  
*R. Roos* 539
- Gastric mucosal pattern in allergic rhinitis  
*S. Selvanarayanan* 541
- Aspirin sensitivity, bronchial asthma and nasal polyps. Medical and surgical aspects for the otolaryngologist  
*I. Shubich* 543
- Secretory otitis media in case of atopic-allergic and non-allergic patients  
*M. Stepper* 546
- Quantitative nasal provocation test with rhinograph  
*N. Usui, A. Iwata, M. Uchiyama and M. Tsukasa* 548
- Integrating allergy in otolaryngologic training  
*A.J. Serrins* 550
- Vaso-motor assessment by cutaneous testing in vaso-motor rhinitis  
*M. Wayoff, D.A. Moneret Vautrin and P. Gazel* 553
- Ultrastructure of the muscle spindle in the arythenoid muscle of human larynx  
*M. Hirayama, M. Machino, M. Tachibana and O. Mizukoshi* 555
- Morphological study of muscle spindles in intrinsic laryngeal muscles of human larynx  
*Y. Katto, H. Okamura and N. Yanagihara* 557
- Transplant of laryngeal cartilaginous structure in dogs. Experimental study  
*A. Vicent and M. Lopez* 559
- Afferent projections to the nucleus ambiguus in the brain stem of the cat  
*T. Mitsumasu, Y. Yoshida, M. Hirano and T. Kanaseki* 562
- Central location of efferent neurons supplying the laryngeal and the vagal nerves - An HRP study in monkeys  
*Y. Yoshida, T. Miyazaki, T. Mitsumasu, M. Hirano and T. Kanaseki* 564
- DNA classification of human pituitary tumours  
*M. Anniko, B. Tribukait and J. Wersall* 566

- Unusual causes of sleep apnea syndrome  
*I. Brama, S. Taicher and I. Gay* 566
- Literature searching by microcomputer  
*K. Clark and J.G. Neely* 571
- A multidisciplinary approach to the temporomandibular joint  
*C.C. Cody III and J.J. McClendon* 573
- Sonography of branchiogenic cysts - A diagnostic frequency-related appearance  
*M.C. Grasl and P.C. Hajek* 575
- Human pleomorphic adenomas transplanted to nude mice  
*C. Barfoed, N. Græm, P. Bretlau and J. Rygaard* 577
- Comparative histochemical study of the glycoconjugates in the human respiratory mucosa  
*K. Fukami, M. Ohyama and Y. Hanamure* 579
- Electron microscopic investigations in bronchial secretion of infants and children for detecting viral infections  
*L. Imrei, P. Sotonyi and T. Marialigeti* 581
- Penetration of ciprofloxacin into nasal secretions  
*W. Giebel, U. Ullmann, A. Dalhoff and P. Koeppe* 583
- Measurement of vertebral blood flow during stellate ganglion blocks with ultrasonic doppler method  
*M. Sano, M. Tsuda, K. Goto and T. Matsunaga* 586
- Digital subtraction angiography in patients with central vertigo  
*T. Inamori, Y. Umetani, Y. Takayasu, H. Wakutani, T. Kumoi* 588
- Ultrastructural changes with carbon dioxide and neodymium YAG laser. Cutaneous tissue interaction  
*R.A. Kirschner, A.S. Kirschner, B.C. McDonnell, J. Bishop, D. DeBias, C. Greene, F. Munson and R. Giuliano* 590
- Enzyme histochemical, immunopathological and ultrastructural studies of the lymphoid component of parotid adenolymphoma  
*T. Maruyama, Y. Murakami and S. Haraguchi* 592
- The epithelium of the human Wharton's duct in obstructive sialadenitis. A TEM and SEM study  
*P. Puxeddu, F. Testa-Riva, R. Solinas, A. Agus and A. Riva* 594
- Microaspiration of gastro-esophageal reflux in chronic bronchitis and asthma  
*N. Sandberg, I. Månsson, U. Bengtsson, S. Carlsson and M. Ruth* 596
- Murine subrenal capsule assay for squamous cell carcinoma of the head and neck  
*C.M. Stiernberg, W.M.H. Rotzler, K. Valyi-Nagy, J.A. Hokanson, P. Hale and B.J. Bailey* 598
- A study for chlamydia psittaci isolation technique  
*S. Mukai, C. Mukai and I. Suzuki* 600
- Spectrum of Kaposi's sarcoma of the hypopharynx in AIDS: Its diagnosis, evaluation and management  
*C.D. Sooy, C.O.M. Ho and S.D. Wall* 602
- Total circular pharyngo-laryngectomy - The radial forearm flap (Chinese flap) in reconstruction of the alimentary canal  
*M. Zanaret, G. Magalon, J.-M. Thomassin, R. Legre, M. Cannoni and A. Pech* 604

- Adjuvant strategy for treatment of incurable oropharyngeal malignomas  
*L. Osterwald, D. Gefeller, K. Dahlem and V. Bendel* 606
- Carcinomatous changes in pharyngeal diverticula  
*M.E. Baraka and S.A.A. Sadek* 608
- The significance of palpable adenopathy in squamous cell carcinoma of the pyriform sinus: A retrospective study of 41 cases  
*M. Broniatowski* 610
- Phonatory function of the partially ablated larynx  
*T. Haji, S.M. Blaugrund and W.J. Gould* 612
- Application of CO<sub>2</sub> laser to the carcinoma of the larynx  
*T. Inouye* 614
- Supracricoid hemilaryngopharyngectomy. Surgical technique, indications and functional and carcinological results  
*J. Lacau St Guily, D. Brasnu, P. Contencin, A. Fabre and H. Laccourreye* 616
- Histological evaluation of contralateral neck metastasis of pyriform sinus cancer  
*Y. Murakami, T. Ikari, S. Haraguchi, K. Okada, T. Maruyama and S. Saito* 619
- Extended hemipharyngolaryngectomy in pyriform sinus cancer for voice preservation without aspiration - A modified technique  
*T. Takemiya, F. Shimada, K. Omura and M. Ichinose* 621
- A surgical technique for voice preservation in postcricoid cancer by creation of speech tube using anterior half of larynx  
*S. Takemiya, F. Shimada, K. Omura and M. Ichinose* 623
- Voice preservation in postcricoid cancer by creation of speech tube using retained anterior half of larynx  
*S. Takemiya, F. Shimada, K. Omura, M. Ichinose* 625
- Histopathological study of the pyriform sinus cancer by means of whole-organ serial sectioning  
*T. Tani and M. Amatsu* 627
- DNA ploidy level in relation to irradiation response in oral cavity carcinomas  
*G. Franzén, C. Klintonberg, J. Olofsson and B. Risberg* 629
- Surgical aspects of malignant tumours of the tongue  
*P.P. Hamim, P.A. Shah and R.P. Shah* 631
- Management of advanced cancer of the tongue by total glossectomy without laryngectomy  
*P. Gehanno, C. Guedon and F. Veber* 633
- Sequential intra-arterial chemotherapy and surgery - Preliminary results of a clinical trial  
*L.P. Kowalski, A. Rapoport, J. de Andrade Sobrinho, A.S. Fava and M.B. de Carvalho* 635
- An unusually aggressive squamous cell carcinoma of the aerodigestive tract correlating with in vitro activity in a subrenal capsule mouse model  
*S.M. Parnes, J.A. Bennett and G. Colman* 637
- Supracricoid partial laryngectomy. Surgical technique, indications, functional and carcinologic results  
*D. Brasnu, J. Lacau St Guily, M. Menard and H. Laccourreye* 639



Quantitative evaluation of aspiration in a new modification of neoglottic reconstruction

*D. Cerenko and I. Padovan* 642

Comparative study by means of electroglottography and spectrography in voice of patients operated by cordectomy or total laryngectomy

*G. Motta, U. Cesari, M. Iengo and G. Villari* 644

A simple technique to prevent tracheostomal stenosis following total laryngectomy

*Shyue-Yih Chang* 646

Keratosis of the larynx: Histologic and clinic correlates

*A. Gallo, M. de Vincentiis, P. Gallo and D. Marcotullio* 648

Jejunal graft: Used as reconstruction of the upper digestive tract after extensive laryngopharyngectomy and as neoglottis phonatoria after laryngectomy

*M.C. Grasl, K. Ehrenberger, W. Wicke, H. Swoboda, H. Piza and R. Roka* 650

The head and neck carcinoma patient with multiple primary tumors: A growing challenge

*T.W. Grossman* 652

Mediastinal tracheostomy for recurrent cancer. Use of a perforated pectoralis major myocutaneous island flap

*M. Hamoir, N. Calteux, T. Robillard, A.J. Yousif, M. Remacle, A. de Coninck and J. van den Eeckhaut* 654

Oncogene hybridization in head and neck cancer

*W.H. Friedman, B. Rosenblum, P. Loewenstein, H. Thornton, G. Katsantonis and M. Green* 657

The selective role of CO<sub>2</sub> laser for the treatment of laryngeal carcinoma in 1984 in the Laser Surgery Center at the Hospital of Saint Raphael, New Haven, Connecticut

*E. Yanagisawa, N.C. Kar and Keat-Jin Lee* 659

Extra-capsular spreading as morphological parameter of prognostic evaluation in laryngeal carcinoma

*G. Motta Jr, L. D'Angelo, G. Villari and C. Antonelli* 661

Hypertetraploid cells in different laryngeal epithelia - A prognostic marker?

*J. Olofsson, G. Franzén, J. Lundgren and K. Bjelkenkrantz* 663

Endolaryngeal CO<sub>2</sub> laser surgery for radiation failures

*V. Oswal* 665

Presence and distribution of Langerhans cells in normal and neoplastic laryngeal mucosa

*P. Tamplenizza and F. Ottaviani* 667

Clinical T and pathological T in the supraglottic cancer

*G. Rizzotto, G. Carlon, I. Serafini and T. Pazzala* 669

Primary malignant melanoma of the larynx

*T.M. Schrimpf, R.J. Schrimpf and T. Panke* 671

Modification in T-E shunt (Amatsu's technique) to prevent aspiration

*A. Taniguchi, T. Fukazawa, Y. Shimomura and F. Oumura* 673

Head and neck cancer in Nigeria. Clinical evaluation of patients seen at Lagos University Teaching Hospital 1973-1982

*O.O. Idewu, L. Monye, V. Morid and F.A. Durosinmi-Etti* 675

- Further experience with the stylohamular dissection for malignancies of the infratemporal fossa  
*G.P. Katsantonis, W.H. Friedman, B.N. Rosenblum and M.H. Cooper* 677
- Carcinoembryonal antigen production of tumors in the cephalic-cervical region  
*I. Lampé and A. Tóth* 679
- Infantile cervical neuroblastoma  
*O.L. Mendonça Cruz, I.D. Miziara, V. Odone Filho and A. Miniti* 681
- S-100 protein as an aid to the identification of melanocyte tumors of the head and neck  
*R. Metson, Duan-Ren Wen, A.J. Cochran and M.W. Burk* 683
- Carcinoma of the parotid duct  
*R. Metson, L. Hoover, O. Owens and P.H. Ward* 685
- From macro- to micro-endoscopic surgery with CO<sub>2</sub> laser in 400 patients with a hypopharyngeal (Zenker's) diverticulum  
*P.E. Hoeksema, J.J.M. van Overbeek and E.T. Edens* 687
- Silicone tracheal cannula - Update  
*W.G. Lavelle, W.W. Montgomery and E.E. Jacobs Jr* 689
- Tympanoplasty upon demand. Exclusion of the antrum. Elimination of the attic  
*F. Olaizola, D. Alaminos and J.A. Rodriguez-Nuñez* 691
- Does status of middle ear influence the graft take rate of Type I tympanoplasty?  
*Yim-Wah Pang and Wing-Kin Chan* 694
- Influence of middle ear pathology to ceravital implants  
*R. Beck* 696
- Absence of blunting with modified overlay technique  
*S. Gumerindo, S.G. Saul and U. Miguel* 698
- Experimental study and clinical application of hydroxyapatite in middle ear surgery  
*I. Takimoto and M. Hara* 700
- New ceramic implants in middle ear surgery  
*E. Yamamoto* 702
- Smith-McGukin spot  
*C.W. Smith* 704
- Acridine orange stain is superior to gram stain in the bacteriological examination of middle ear effusions  
*P. van Cauwenberge and M. Rysselaere* 706
- Surgical treatment of dermatological carcinomas of the nose: 196 cases operated on between 1979 and 1984  
*C. Beauvillain de Montreuil, L. Lelievre, H. Massot and F. Legent* 709
- Reconstruction of large tracheal defects  
*J. Sidi, M. Bachar and A. Avraham* 712
- The versatile naso-labial flap  
*T.C. Tyler* 714
- Design and construction of facial flaps  
*T.C. Tyler* 717

- Field cancerization in the hypopharynx and cervical esophagus  
*K. Umatani, T. Sato, H. Miyahara, K. Yoshino and Y. Tsuruta* 720
- Squamous metaplasia of the supraglottic region with reference to smoking habits  
*K. Yoshino, T. Sato, H. Miyahara, K. Umatani and Y. Tsuruta* 722
- Suspension laryngoscopy: A retrospective study  
*M. Englender, M. Harell and J. Halevi* 724
- Foreign bodies in the airway and food passage. Statistical analysis of 2,631 cases  
*Shyh-Feng Ko* 726
- Hydron gel implants in vocal cords  
*Z. Kresa, J. Rems and O. Wichterle* 728
- The relationship between xerostomia and radiotherapy in NPC patients  
*Ping Chang and Jau-En Chern* 730
- Cancer of the nasopharynx (N.P.C.)  
*G. Choa* 732
- Incidence of nasopharyngeal malignant growth (N.P.M.) and lock-jaw as bizarre presentation  
*S.K. De* 736
- Epstein-Barr virus early antigen induction in nasopharyngeal hybrid cells by Chinese medical herbs  
*M. Furukawa, T. Komori and R. Umeda* 738
- EB virus antibodies and lymphocyte subsets in nasopharyngeal carcinoma before and after radiation therapy  
*Tsong-Chou Lynn and Shih-Mien Tu* 740
- Systematization of nasopharyngeal tissue  
*J. Romue* 742
- Review of nasopharyngeal carcinomas at Geisinger Medical Center - 1960-1979  
*D.J. Stetz and D.P. Vrabec* 744
- The Vienna extra- and intracochlear prosthesis: Speech-coding and speech-understanding  
*I.J. Hochmair-Desoyer, E.S. Hochmair and K. Burian* 747
- Cochlear implant: Comparative study of the mono and multichannel implantation  
*J. Bosch and R. Colomina* 752
- Evaluation of the extracochlear Vienna/3 M implant - Patient selection and preliminary results  
*G. Bredberg, B. Lindström and A. Risberg* 754
- Respective indications of single and multichannel cochlear implant in case of pre-lingual deafness  
*C.H. Chouard, C. Fugain, B. Meyer and F. Chabolle* 756
- Evaluation of a 22-channel cochlear implant  
*S.B. Waltzman and N.L. Cohen* 758
- Sound experience by multichannel cochlear implant patients  
*J.L. Parkin* 760
- Extracochlear chronic electrical stimulation in deaf patients  
*E.A Richter* 762
- Cochlear implant pre and post lingual clinical experience  
*A. Zuñiga C* 765

- Evaluation of candidates for cochlear implant surgery  
*F.O. Black, D.J. Lilly, L.P. Fowler and P. Stypulkowski* 767
- Clinical implications of histological findings in the animal labyrinth exposed to cochlear implant surgery  
*P.A. Burgio* 769
- Iowa cochlear implant comparison project  
*B.J. Gantz* 772
- Pitch match test for tinnitus by heptatonic scale  
*K. Ohsaki, M. Kimura, I. Inokuchi, T. Sugiura, S. Nakagiri, T. Fujimura, A. Kimura, Y. Masuda and I. Koide* 774
- External electrical stimulation - Tinnitus control - Tinnitus suppression with prolonged stimulation  
*A. Shulman and J. Tonndorf* 776
- Electrophysiological diagnosis of peripheral facial palsy  
*A. Kikuchi* 778
- Results of caloric tests and visual suppression tests in seasickness  
*T. Matsunaga, N. Fujita, H. Kakiuchi, H. Yamamoto, K. Yane and S. Ohhira* 780
- Nerve excitability test using percutaneous needle electrodes  
*T. Kobayashi and K. Ishii* 782
- Congenital cholesteatoma of the middle ear: A surgical approach  
*M.J. Levenson, S.C. Parisier, E. Smouha and S. Wenig* 784
- Epithelial migration on the tympanic membrane and external canal  
*K. Makino and M. Amatsu* 786
- Study of eustachian tube drainage function with radioisotope ( $^{99m}\text{Tc}$ )  
*S.A.M. Marone and A. Miniti* 788
- Study of the eustachian tube drainage function with radioisotope ( $^{99m}\text{Tc}$ ), and the relations with the equipressive function  
*S.A.M. Marone and A. Miniti* 791
- Inner ear function in diabetes mellitus with peripheral neuropathies  
*Y.N. Mehra, Y.K. Sharma, S.B.S. Mann and R.J. Dash* 794
- Hearing conservation surgery for acoustic tumors - A clinical-pathological correlative study  
*J.G. Neely* 796
- A SEM study on the vascular system of the endolymphatic duct and sac  
*Y. Ogura, R. Saito, K. Matsubara, N. Matsumoto, M. Fujimoto, T. Ohmichi and K. Terazawa* 797
- Type II collagen in the human and monkey ear  
*T. Ishibe, K. Tomoda, T.J. Yoo, A. Kang and M. Cremer* 799
- T cell subsets of Cowden's disease - A report of 4 cases  
*T. Komori, M. Furukawa and R. Umeda* 801
- Immunohistological aspects of focus-tonsils and pustulosis palmaris et plantaris  
*K. Kuki* 803
- Infectious and neoplastic oral manifestations of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome  
*C.A. Patow, D.M. Lewis and A.M. Macher* 805

- Peripheral blood lymphocyte response to exogenous IL 2 administration and endogenous IL 2 production in patients with advanced cancer of larynx  
*E. Proto, P. Puxeddu, F. Panu, G. Orgiana, D. Degioannis and G. Mantovani* 807
- Specific antigens associated to squamous cell carcinoma, isolated from maxillary cancer  
*S. Saito, N. Komatsu, M. Sakai, H. Miyake, S. Yamauchi and K. Kato* 809
- Type II collagen-induced autoimmune salpingitis in the rat  
*N. Sudo, K. Tomoda, R. Floyd, T. Ishibe and T.J. Yoo* 811
- Generation of monoclonal antibody reactive with human maxillary sinus carcinoma cells  
*M. Takahashi, N. Kanai and M. Kumai* 813
- Reconstruction of subglottic larynx: A clinical and experimental study  
*M. Friedman and V. Grybauskas* 815
- The use of a nasal cartilage graft (homograft) for treatment of tracheal stenosis in a child  
*A. Wilder, Y. Flatau and G. Rosen* 817
- The safety of neonatal intubation  
*S.K. Dankle, D.E. Schuller, R.E. McClead and J. Butler* 820
- The anterior cricoid split procedure as an alternative to tracheotomy: Further experience  
*J.A. Stankiewicz* 822
- Ultrastructural findings in trigeminal neuralgia  
*J.M. Sanchez Fernandez and M.A.C. de la Torre* 824
- The advantages of CO<sub>2</sub> laser in transoral resection of cancer of the oral cavity  
*J. Sidi, A. Abraham, K. Segal and G. Harel* 826
- Surgical treatment of advanced or regressed cancers from the thyroid gland  
*D.O. Rodriguez-Mora* 828
- Sinus histiocytosis with massive cervical lymphadenopathy: A case report and review of the literature  
*V.G. Schweitzer, G.D. Bobier and S.V. Weilert* 829
- Fine needle aspiration in the initial evaluation of cervical adenopathy  
*A. Shaha, C. Webber and J. Marti* 833
- Significance of positive margins in basal cell carcinoma  
*W.W. Shockley and F.J. Stucker* 836
- Sequential cisplatin (DDP) and 5-fluorouracil (5-FU) in advanced squamous cell head and neck cancer  
*K.S. Sridhar* 838
- Combination antiemetic prophylaxis in cisplatin chemotherapy of advanced head and neck squamous cell cancer  
*K.S. Sridhar* 840
- Malignant fibrous histiocytoma of the head and neck  
*D.L. Webb, R. Sawyer and D.J. Wittich* 842
- Clinicopathological studies of malignant melanoma  
*T. Hirano, Y. Hattori, G. Asano and K. Yuge* 844
- A histochemical evaluation of experimentally reinnervated canine laryngeal muscles  
*K. Brøndbo, C. Hall, H.A. Dahl, E. Teig and K.M. Gujord* 846

- Restored abduction of paralyzed vocal cords following reinnervation of abductor muscles by phrenic motoneurons in the cat  
*F. Baldissera, G. Cantarella, G. Marini and F. Ottaviani* 848
- Functional results after experimental reinnervation of the posterior cricoarytenoid muscle of the larynx in dogs  
*E. Teig, K. Brøndbo, C. Hall and H.A. Dahl* 850
- Intubation damage and recurrent nerve paralysis after thyroidectomies  
*R. Hoffmann, V. Barth and W. Schaetzle* 852
- Electrodiagnosis of motoric disorders of brain nerves (computer aided EMG and NMG)  
*W.F. Thumfart* 854
- Necrotizing chondritis of the larynx in a diabetic presenting as a subglottic carcinoma  
*R.N. Clark* 856
- Early and late management of gunshot wounds to the face and neck  
*P.J. Donald* 859
- Cardiac arrhythmias in otolaryngologic surgery  
*R. Epprecht, P. Vidal and M. del Pilar Gonzalez* 861
- Mycosis in recurrent purulent tonsillitis  
*M. Fradis, L. Podoshin, R. Gertner, M. Grushka, I. Boss, G. Wellisch and Z. Cahana* 863
- The larynx in pulmonary tuberculosis  
*M.H.A. Beg and S. Marfani* 865
- Lifting of the vocal cords for Reinkes space oedema  
*J. Abitbol and R.J. Feder* 867
- Treatment options for obstructive sleep apnea patients  
*C.W. Gehris Jr* 868
- Temporomandibular joint ankylosis in children  
*O. Gupta* 870
- Lingual tonsillitis - A commonly overlooked diagnosis  
*D.W. Hales* 872
- Rhinoplasty in identical twins. A case report  
*K. Azem* 874
- The black nose: 1985 An atomic and profile analysis  
*H.L. Baker* 876
- Classic septorhinoplasty with modifications  
*D. Bernstein* 878
- The value of the septal correction in the treatment of twisted or saddled noses  
*L. Gomulinski* 880
- External rhinoplasty for the twisted noses  
*H. Moustafa and W.H. Abousheleb* 883
- Decortication (external) rhinoplasty  
*I.F. Padovan and S.B. Jugo* 885
- Skull base and neck approach to large glomus tumor surgery  
*V. Diamante, L. Barbon, G. Haedo, S. Montes and D. Orfila* 887
- Middle ear adenoma  
*J.S. Lewis and M. Keen* 889
- Total temporal bone resection for osteogenic sarcoma: A preliminary report  
*R.T. Sataloff, D.L. Myers, B.R. Roberts and S. Telian* 892

- Cancer of the middle ear  
*E. Scola and B. Scola* 894
- Necrotizing otitis externa occurring concurrently with epidermoid carcinoma  
*K.F. Mattucci, M. Setzen, P. Galantich and M. Susin* 896
- Malignant nasoethmoidal teratoma  
*R. Epprecht, G. Valdes, A. Sola and M. del Pilar Gonzalez* 898
- Conservation surgery for invasive ethmoid tumors  
*C.N. Ford, R.C. Mixter, R.K. Dortzbach, M.J. Javid and L.W. Houston* 899
- Balloon occluded arterial infusion with direct hemoperfusion for head and neck cancers  
*Y. Hayashi* 901
- Malignant melanoma of the nasal cavity treated with cryosurgery with liquid nitrogen  
*B. Olariu, D. Olariu, V. Ciuchi, D. Raducanu and V. Albastroiu* 903
- Adenocarcinoma of the ethmoid sinuses  
*J. Olofsson, C. Klintonberg, H. Hellquist and H. Sökjer* 906
- Clinical trials with UFT in head and neck cancer  
*T. Takaoka, Y. Inuyama and J. Tanaka* 908
- Calcifying epithelial odontogenic tumor: Pindborg tumor. A case report  
*J.V. Quiroz and J. Bellasai* 910
- Case report of a branchial cleft cyst from the vallecula  
*Y.P. Hsieh* 912
- Surgical treatment for congenital middle ear anomalies  
*Y. Ogura, Y. Masuda, S. Watanabe, K. Nishizaki, M. Suehiro and K. Uno* 915
- The influence of a nasal decongestant. A sonotubometric study  
*L. Olén, B. Friberg, I. Melén and L. Wählander* 917
- Childhood severe-profound sensorineural deafness  
*L.A. Castagno and M.L. Carvalho* 919
- Effects of utero ultrasound on fetal hearing: A preliminary report  
*L.W. Brown, R. Sawyer and K.P. Aspinall* 921
- Tympanomeatal index in permeatal surgery  
*A. Sinha* 923
- Improvements in the surgical treatment of congenital ear dysplasias  
*L.S. Manolides and P.D. Michailides* 925
- Some observations on discharging mastoid cavities  
*R.N. Srivastava, D. Kumar, P.K. Varshney and M. Pandey* 927
- Acute sensorineural hearing loss due to exposure to loud sounds in rock concerts and discos  
*Y. Toda, I. Takeyama and K. Nakajima* 929
- Acoustic reflectivity for diagnosis of middle ear effusions: Comparison with results of myringotomy  
*M. Fried, J. Kelly, H. Zubick, D. Vernick and M. Strome* 931
- Diabetes mellitus and cochleovestibular disturbance  
*A.G. Piras, L.C. Oliveira, E. Lockhart, P. Brandi, H.E. Guaita and M.B. Sahagun* 933

The application of human and animal tissue for testing humoral antibodies in inner ear disease

*N.-R. Wei, W. Giebel, H. Kaupp and D. Plester* 935

Detection of vestibular asymmetry by dynamic characteristics of the vestibulo-ocular system

*Y. Shibata, T. Tokita, H. Miyata and Y. Ito* 938

CT radiologic criteria in the management of frontal sinus fracture

*P.G. Liu, J.B. Jacobs, D.L. Reede, W.A. Cohen, H.M. Berg and N.L. Cohen* 940

Ultrasonography of the paranasal sinuses - A screening method in clinical routine

*M. Jannert and L. Andréasson* 943

Transmission electron microscopic study of the nose cilia in children with chronic and recurrent airway infections of unknown origin: Diagnosis of immotile-cilia syndrome

*J. Byloos, J. Ramet, N. Rom, A. Malfrout and P.A.R. Clement* 945

Midline palatal split for access to the central skull base, cervical spine, brainstem and deeper neurologic structures

*C.M. Johnson III, S. Hargett, T.S. Park and C. Haworth* 947

Indications and surgical techniques for lesions of the facial nerve due to temporal bone fractures

*R.F. Bento, A. Miniti and A.J. Tedesco-Marchese* 949

Prediction of outcome of uvulopalatopharyngoplasty using preoperative somnofluoroscopy

*G.P. Katsantonis, J.K. Walsh and F.J. Krebs* 951

The carbon dioxide laser photothermal peel

*R.A. Kirschner, B.C. McDonnell and R. Giuliano* 953

Pituitary tumors: Diagnosis and treatment in the 1980's

*I. Goodrich and Keat-Jin Lee* 955

Some anatomical data related to the transnasal-sphenoidal resection of the pituitary fossa tumors

*Shangze Ling* 957

Disagreement between methods of nutritional assessment in head and neck cancer

*B.S. Linn and D.S. Robinson* 959

Ectopic thyroid tissue in the head and neck

*I.W.S. Mair, S. Økstad, T.J. Eide and J.A. Sundsfjord* 961

Glottic reconstruction by thyroid cartilage - External perichondral flap

*A. Pech, J.-M. Thomassin, M. Zanaret, C. Scavennec and M. Cannoni* 963

Functional neck dissection in cancer of the larynx

*M. Tomas, C. Gavilan and J. Gavilan* 965

Diagnostic feasibility and assessment of prognostic factors in laryngeal cancer

*M.F. Vega, B. Scola, A. Alonso, A. Santos, M. Lozano and M. Desco* 967

Failures of surgery and/or radiotherapy in laryngeal cancer

*M. Vega, B. Scola, A. Alonso, A. Santos, M. Lozano and M. Desco* 969



- Results with surgery and/or radiotherapy in laryngeal cancer  
*M.F. Vega, B. Scola, A. Alonso, A. Santos, M. Lozano and M. Desco* 971
- Advanced relapses in the tracheostoma after total laryngotomy - Clinical research  
*J.J.A. Vicent and B. Cardiel* 972
- Malignancy process in precancerous larynx lesions. Statistical-clinical consequences  
*A. Vicent* 974
- Functional laryngectomy (by the emptying of the larynx technique): revision of 60 cases  
*B. Butragueño and A. Vicent* 976
- 'T' laryngectomy  
*M. de Vincentiis, A. Gallo and R. Turchetta* 978
- Parotid fascia: Anatomical and histological studies and surgical implications  
*G. Jost, Y. Levet and M. Wassef* 980
- Facelift and lipo-suction  
*T.C. Tyler* 982
- The coronal forehead lift  
*T.C. Tyler* 985
- Our experiences in total auricular reconstruction  
*Y. Nishimura, T. Kumoi, J. Kimura and N. Tamura* 988
- Corrective cosmetics adjunctive to the field of dermatology and cosmetic surgery  
*N.C. Roberts* 990
- Extubation in acute epiglottitis using flexible fiberoptic laryngoscopy  
*K. Browne and K. Clark* 992
- Fiberoptic manipulation of the upper airway and the preoperative assessment for uvulopalatopharyngoplasty  
*J.N. Hausfeld* 994
- Transcutaneous oxygen and carbon dioxide tensions in chronic upper airways. Obstruction and the effect of tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy  
*A.G. Tucker and C.J. Reynolds* 996
- Bronchoscopy by otolaryngologists in small hospitals  
*B.O. Ollman and G. Aasand* 998
- Synchronous second primary tumors of the upper aero-digestive tract  
*A. Shaha, E. Hoover, N. Hammerman and J. Marti* 1000
- Management of foreign bodies in the bronchi  
*W.H. Abou-Sheleb and H.M. Moustafa* 1003
- Videofiberstroboscopy - A method for the diagnosis of larynx cancer at an early stage  
*B. Tommerup, S. Prytz and S. Telmer* 1005
- Acoustic neuroma - The patient's perspective  
*D.A. Wiegand, V. Fickel and C. Zierdt* 1007
- Transtemporal removal of acoustic neuromas from the CPA with preservation of hearing  
*M.E. Wigand, T. Haid, M. Berg and G. Rettinger* 1009
- Hearing after translabyrinthine resection of an acoustic neuroma  
*R. Sawyer* 1013

- Conservative management of acoustic neuroma in the elderly patient  
*H. Silverstein, A. McDaniel and H. Norrell* 1015
- Hearing preservation after acoustic neuroma surgery using intraoperative direct eighth cranial nerve monitoring  
*H. Silverstein, A.B. McDaniel and H. Norrell* 1017
- Neuro-otological findings in cerebellar tumours  
*C. Morales-Garcia, E. Rios, O. Hoppe and H. Fantuzzi* 1019
- The endoscopy of the cerebellopontine angle - Indication, technique and results  
*M. Handrock and F. Oppel* 1021
- Dextran therapy for sudden sensorineural hearing loss  
*Jang Jenq-Chyuan* 1023
- Bilateral sensorineural hearing impairment associated with bilateral internal auditory canal enlargement  
*K. Kitamura* 1025
- Is prostacyclin a cochleoprotective substance?  
*O. Michel and R. Matthiad* 1027
- Steroid treatment on idiopathic sudden sensorineural hearing loss  
*M. Oda and Y. Nomura* 1029
- Deafness following mumps: The possible pathogenesis and incidence of deafness  
*Y. Murakami and N. Muzushima* 1031
- The clinical use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy for disorders of the inner ear  
*M. Pilgramm, H. Lenders and K. Schuman* 1033
- Adenoid cystic carcinoma of the larynx - A case report  
*T. Wang and Y.N. Lin* 1036
- Results of surgical treatment of advanced carcinoma of the larynx  
*W.I. Wei, K.H. Lam and W.F. Lau* 1038
- Complications of total laryngopharyngoesophagectomy and mediastinal dissection with gastric pull-up reconstruction  
*C.F. Wurster and G.A. Sisson* 1041
- The trial for screening of laryngeal cancer using computer  
*H. Yoshida, S. Ebihara and H. Kasuya* 1043
- Reconstruction of the cervical esophagus with the right colon  
*R.Y. Lim and J.P. Boland* 1045
- Globus hystericus: A clinico-radiological study  
*A.M. Talaat, M.S. Elwany, F.M. Talaat and M.M. Nahhas* 1047
- Treatment of the lateral middle face fracture through miniplate osteosynthesis: An advancement  
*W.L. Mang* 1049
- A new hemipalatal approach to the nasopharyngeal cavity - Experimental and clinical study  
*Yang-Gi Min and Jae Hee Kim* 1052
- Influence of disordered nasal breathing on sleep in children  
*S. Miyazaki and K. Togawa* 1054
- Malaria and otorhinolaryngology in endemic countries  
*K.E.F. Moustafa* 1056
- About upper cervical lymphadenitis (UCLA) caused by mycoplasma infections  
*S. Mukai, C. Mukai and K. Asaoka* 1058

- Macroglossia in children: An approach to diagnosis and treatment  
*C.M. Myer III, A.J. Hotaling and J.S. Reilly* 1060
- Isolation of chlamydiae from the patients with upper cervical lymphadenitis (UCLA)  
*S. Mukai, C. Mukai and I. Suzuki* 1062
- Indication of electro-coagulation using high frequency currents in oto-rhino-laryngology  
*M. Niho, O. Saeki, N. Tadaki, M. Shiida, M. Ishikawa, J. Tokunaga and K. Terayama* 1064
- Clinical significance of esophageal web in Plummer-Vinson syndrome  
*H. Okamura, K. Suemitsu and S. Tsutsumi* 1066
- Snoring and obstructive sleep apnea in children before and after adenotonsillectomy  
*J.O. Ovesen, C. Siim, P. Clemmesen, G. Wildschiodtz and G. Kischinovsky* 1068
- Induction chemotherapy in head and neck cancer with cis-platinum (C), fluoro 5 uracile (F) and bleomycin (B)  
*V. Bassot, D. Brasnu, J. Lacau St Guily, Menard, A. Fabre, S. Donnadieu, H. Laccourreye and Cl. Jacquillat* 1070
- Intra-arterial chemotherapy and radiotherapy for advanced head and neck cancer: End results of 720 cases  
*L.P. Kowalski, A. Rapoport, J. de Andrade Sobrinho, A.S. Fava, M. Brasilino de Carvalho and O. Peres* 1073
- Internal carotid aneurism of traumatic origin and occurrence as oropharynx tumor  
*J. Traserra, A. Morello, M. Molinero and J. Guerola* 1075
- Three year survival rates in advanced head and neck cancer after induction chemotherapy: Significance of initial response  
*W.J. Primrose, C.W. Vaughan, W.K. Hong, D.D. Karp, B. Willett and M.S. Strong* 1077
- Application of CO<sub>2</sub> laser in oral and nasopharyngeal surgery  
*D. Radonjić* 1079
- High frequency jet ventilation during laser microlaryngoscopy  
*L. Signore, M. de Vincentiis, G. Ruoppolo and C. Ungari* 1081
- Lip reconstructions after malignant tumor surgery: Methods and results  
*D.M. Rheims and R. Meyer* 1083
- Comparative measures of vocal function in 30 speakers with voice disorders  
*D.M. Bless, C.F. Ford, H.A. Leeper, J.H. Brandenburg and T.W. Frank* 1087
- Medical profile of the language-delayed child: Otitis prone vs otitis free  
*P.E. Brookhouser and D.E. Goldgar* 1089
- Analysis of primary versus delayed tracheoesophageal puncture  
*R.R. Casiano, A.J. Maniglia and D.S. Lundy* 1091
- The Groningen button results  
*H.F. Mahieu and A.A. Annyas* 1093
- Analysis of tongue dynamics using the ultrasonic method  
*S. Niimi, S. Kiritani, H. Hirose and Z. Simada* 1095

- T-cells lymphoproliferative disorders in the pathogenesis of midline granuloma and Wegener's granulomatosis  
*V. Ricci and V. Colletti* 1097
- Burns and tracheotomy  
*D.M. Sataloff and R.T. Sataloff* 1099
- Ultrasonographical diagnosis of thyroid tumor with new method and criteria  
*K. Shoji, H. Kitamura, A. Nishikawa, K. Nose, S. Takagita and K. Tabuchi* 1101
- Treatment of keloids with the CO<sub>2</sub> laser  
*F.J. Stuckler* 1103
- Etiological study on isolated esophageal atresia  
*T. Szendrey* 1105
- Limitations of radionuclide scans in parotid tumors  
*V.D. Tadwalkar and V.B. Santos* 1107
- Surgical treatment for dysphagia  
*T. Tanahashi and K. Katsumi* 1109
- Transoral resection of submaxillary gland  
*A.E. Terzian* 1111
- Polysomnographic study of snore - Pathophysiology and therapeutic effect  
*K. Togawa, S. Miyazaki and A. Konno* 1112
- Electrocochleographic study of non-human primates with collagen-induced ear disease  
*T. Takeda, D. Orchik, R.A. Floyd, T. Ishibe, N. Sudo, Y. Yazawa, G. Olson, J.J. Shea and T.J. Yoo* 1114
- Practical use of HRP for defining immune mechanisms of tonsil  
*K. Tomoda, T. Mitani, N. Maeda and T. Kumazawa* 116
- The feasibility of serum. VZV-specific IgA antibodies in zoster of the head and neck  
*F. Tovi, T. Hadar, J. Sidi, B. Sarov and I. Sarov* 1118
- Type II collagen-induced autoimmune endolymphatic hydrops  
*T.J. Yoo, N. Sudo, Y. Yazawa, R.A. Floyd, T. Ishibe and T. Takeda* 1120
- Type II collagen-induced tympanosclerosis model in guinea pigs  
*Y. Yazawa, T.J. Yoo, T. Ishibe, K. Tomoda, R. Floyd, N. Sudo, T. Takeda and S. Ha* 1122
- Lyophilised pleural cartilage in rhinoplasty  
*A. Skevas, Th. Tsoulis, K. Mplouras, G. Exarchakos and N. Papadopoulos* 1124
- The histological behavior of lyophilised pleural bone  
*A. Skevas, Th. Tsoulis, N. Papadopoulos, G. Papachristou and K. Mplouras* 1126
- Sleep apnea induced by tonsillar hypertrophy  
*J. Udaka, K. Takeichi, T. Ishida and Y. Koike* 1128
- Simultaneous manometry and electromyography in the pharyngo-esophageal segment  
*R.H.L. Paping, J.J.M. van Overbeek and H.P. Wit* 1130
- Preservation of the spinal accessory nerve in radical neck dissection, is it worthwhile?  
*W.I. Wei, K.H. Lam, W.F. Lau and T.K. Choi* 1131

Isolation of an autologous fibrinogen adhesive for microsurgery

*R.A. Weisman and G.H. Epstein* 1133

Head and neck manifestations of Goltz's syndrome

*J. Zemlenyi and J.W. Thompson* 1135

**Index of authors** 1137

## FACIAL RECONSTRUCTION WITH IMPLANTS OF POROUS POLYETHYLENE

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Porous polyethylene is a sintered synthetic with a pore size of approximately 150  $\mu$ . The material can easily be formed with the scalpel or thermoplastically and is sterilized with ethylene oxide gas. In the ear, nose and throat field it has so far only become known for its use in the replacement of auditory ossicles.

Experimental animal studies have shown that there is ingrowth into the pores of both connective tissue and bone.

Since, moreover, the danger of infection appears to be relatively low, we have used porous polyethylene for the correction of various defects in the head and neck area.

For the correction of forehead defects, a profile plate of porous polyethylene is formed thermoplastically on a plaster model (Fig. 1).

After an arcuate incision behind the hairline, the defect cavity is filled with a multiply perforated block of porous polyethylene, which can easily be shaped to the required size with the scalpel. Final profiling is done by putting on the prepared profile plate and fixing it with fibrin glue. This type of operation has so far been performed in four patients. In one patient, the defect cavity was filled with iliac crest bone. The roentgenogram before and 2 years after the correction shows the expected ossification of the defect area in this case. But also in cases where filling was accomplished with the perforated synthetic plate, the roentgenogram later shows an obliteration with bone or dense connective tissue. The results were satisfactory in all cases. This material even permits correction of large defects where the skin has grown directly onto the dura.

The maximal postoperative observation period is about three years. There were no complications in any of the cases. The cosmetic result is lasting; resorption has so far not been observed.

The favorable properties of porous polyethylene have induced us to also use it as a frame for reconstruction of the external ear. We use a light implant without edges or points, as shown in Fig. 2. If necessary, it can be reduced in size intraoperatively and used for partial ear reconstructions. For a microtia operation, the implant is covered with the temporalis fascia, the so-called "fan-flap" according to FOX and EDGERTON. This reduces the risk of post-

operative complications. We have implanted such frames five times. None of the implants for correction of microtia have had to be removed. The synthetic frame was particularly suitable in a case of abscess-forming pericondritis of the external ear. The nearly totally destroyed auricular cartilage was replaced by a polyethylene frame after the acute inflammation had been brought under control. Three years later, the relief is satisfactory; the retroauricular fold is normally formed.

If the results obtained continue to be favorable, porous polyethylene could obviate the removal of autogenous bone or cartilage for reconstructive surgery in the head and neck region.

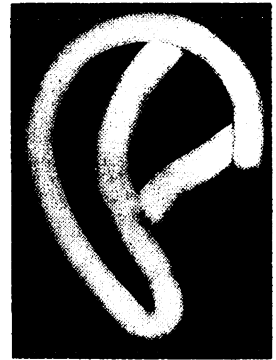
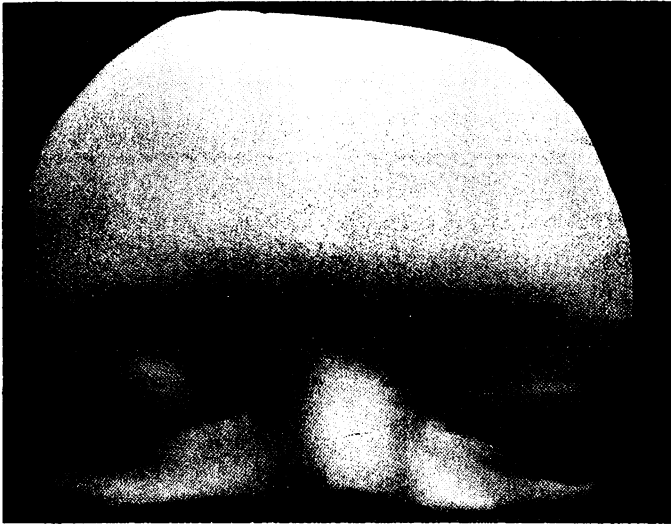


Fig. 1 (left). Profile plate of porous polyethylene cut to the desired shape intraoperatively.

Fig. 2 (right). Framework of PHDPE for auricular reconstruction.

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