The efficacy of cryoanalgesia for the control of trigger-point back pain is assessed in this study. Fifty-one consecutive patients who underwent cryolesioning with a cryoprobe in the spinal surgery professorial unit of a teaching hospital in the UK in the last 2 years were sent a questionnaire to identify the type and severity of pain they suffered, the underlying diagnosis and the treatments received before the cryoprobe were noted and eventually the results of the latter. Twenty-three out of the 51 patients were found to be suffering from trigger point back pain exclusively.

Cryoprobe analgesia using the age old method of freezing the trigger point resulting in long term neuropraxia was offered to the patients who were suffering unremitting back pain despite several previous attempts to control pain. Results showed that 83% of them benefited from the procedure.

An easily reproducible method of locating the trigger points and the results are presented.

doi: 10.1016/j.injury.2006.06.049

Human bite injury in North East England: A review of 92 cases including the impact of alcohol intake on this mode of violent assault

W.G.P. Eardley, M.H. Harrison, M.S.E. Coady

Department of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, James Cook University Hospital, UK

Ninety-two retrospective cases of human bite injury referred to a Plastic Surgery Department are presented. Particular emphasis is placed on the relationship of alcohol intake to these injuries, their distribution and subsequent management. A review of the literature is conducted and trends in alcohol intake and its impact on this violent injury are discussed.

The human bite is a leisure time injury of the young single male in the North East. It has been shown that there is a clear link to alcohol and in particular, weekend drinking. Prompt operative intervention and wounds located at the head and neck have been shown to be associated with a decreased risk of subsequent infection, which reflects findings in the earlier literature.

Fifteen cases were infected. One was the result of a postoperative complication, the remainder being infected on admission. The majority of infected cases were upper limb bites and were associated with a delayed presentation.

This study provides an insight into the presentation and associations of the human bite injury.

doi: 10.1016/j.injury.2006.06.050

Hip fractures patients and post-operative hyponatremia—The Boston experience

D. Angadi, R. Vadivelu, R.G. Deshmukh

Department of Trauma & Orthopaedics, Leicester, UK

Post-operative hyponatremia in the elderly population is a major health problem. The reported incidence in the literature varies from 3 to 30%. However, there are very few reports, which clearly address post-operative hyponatremia in hip fractures. Hyponatremia is defined as sodium level below 130 mmol/l in our hospital. The main aim of this study was to analyze the incidence and identify the associated contributing factors leading to post-operative hyponatremia in patients with fractures of the femoral neck. One hundred and twenty-eight patients who underwent treatment for hip fracture from December 2004 to May 2005 were included in the study. Demographic details and blood parameters information was obtained from the trauma admission records and the Hospital Information Support System (HISS). The mean age at the time of operation was 82.5 years. The mean pre-operative sodium level was 135 mmol/l. Ninety-eight percent of the patients had their postoperative blood test done with in 48 h. Pre-operative hyponatremia was seen in four patients (3.1%). Post-operatively 16 (12.9%) patients developed hyponatremia on day 1 and the incidence decreased to 2.41% (3 patients). However, some patients showed a tendency to develop hyponatremia around the 5th post-operative day (5 patients—4%). With further detailed analysis, patients in their 7th decade were more prone to develop hyponatremia compared to the others. Surprisingly patients over 85 years and above had a relatively lower incidence (2.34%) of hyponatremia. In our series, there was no statistically significant difference between the pre and post-operative serum sodium concentrations.

Though there is some evidence, regarding elderly people developing hyponatremia during early post-operative period our study shows that there is a tendency for these patients to develop hyponatremia later during the 1st week. Hence, we believe that close monitoring of these patients is essential especially during the first 10 days post-operatively to prevent hyponatremia and its complications.

doi: 10.1016/j.injury.2006.06.051

Gap index—A good predictor of failure of plaster cast in distal forearm fractures

A. Malviya, D. Tsintzas, C.E. Bache, P. Gibbons, P. Glithero

Department of Trauma & Orthopaedics, Newcastle, UK