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CASE REPORT

METATARSAL HEAD OSTEOTOMY FOR A SUPERNUMERARY DIGIT

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Law IV of the FIFA's laws of the game of football (1984) dictates that football match referees should not allow one or a few players to play without footwear when other players are wearing boots.

HS is a talented young footballer from one of the Gulf States who was used to playing football barefoot. As he progressed in the game and came into contention for membership of his country's National Squad difficulties were experienced because he had a supernumerary toe and was unable to get his foot into football boots. He therefore could not play in international or league games when other players were wearing boots.

He had a significantly adducted great toe (hallux) which articulated with the head of the first metatarsal as did a small second toe (Fig. 1).

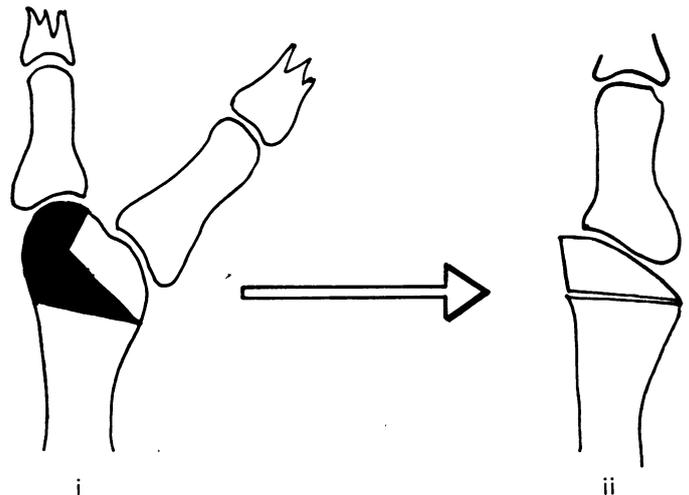
In order to achieve a foot which would enable him to play football in boots it was, therefore, decided to amputate the second toe and re-align the big toe.

The operation involved the removal of the second toe with implantation of its long extensor and flexor tendons into those of the hallux. A wedge osteotomy of the head of the first metatarsal was then carried out, removing most of the surface of the second toe joint, re-aligning the big toe by closure of the wedge (Fig. 2).

Subsequently the patient's foot was immobilised in plaster of Paris for six weeks, after which he underwent a programme of mobilisation and has resumed playing football. The end result is as shown (Fig. 3) displaying an effectively normal foot.

DISCUSSION

McElvenny (1941) reviewed the literature of Hallux rigidus and associated developmental anomalies and has described an operation for re-aligning the adducted toe. The condition is not common.

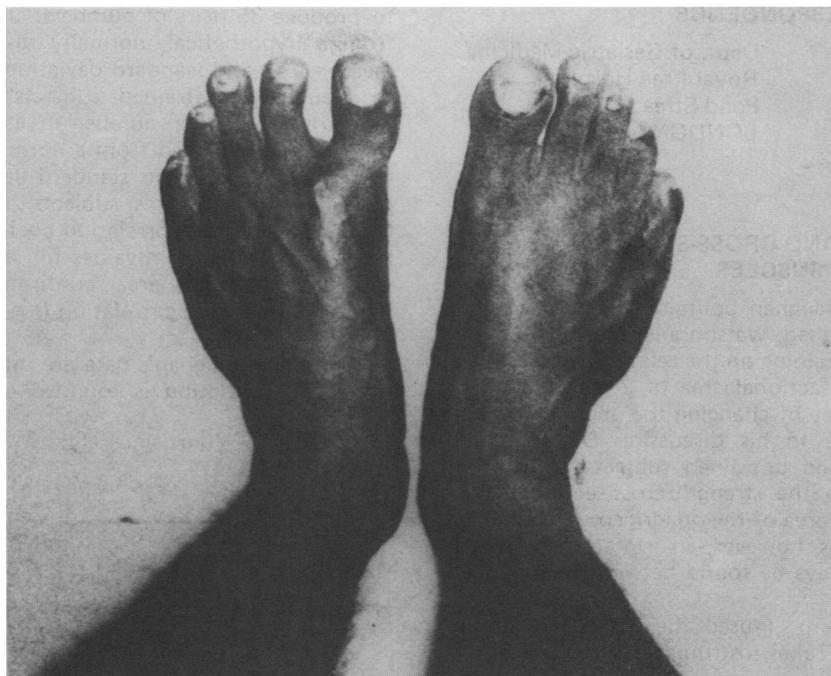


Osteotomy of 1st metatarsal head. 2nd toe and shaded area of head removed.

Here then is one of those "offbeat" cases where reconstructive surgery enables a young sportsman to attain his sporting potential and indeed achieve a status in life which would otherwise have been denied him. It was tempting to carry out a less complex amputation of the hallux (adducted) leaving the "supernumerary" second toe, but a better foot would clearly have been achieved (as happily it was) with the more extensive procedure. The biomechanical principles underlying the procedure chosen were simple and straightforward and the operation was effected with minimum disturbance to the patient and an excellent long-term result.

References

- International Football Association Board, 1984. Laws of the Game and Universal Guide for Referees. Zurich, Federation Internationale de Football Association.
- McElvenny, R. T., 1941 "Hallux varus". *Quart.Bul.North West Univ. Med.School* 15: 277.



BOOK REVIEW

Title: **MANUAL OF CLINICAL PROBLEMS IN SURGERY WITH ANNOTATED KEY REFERENCES**
Authors: Bruce S. Cutler, MD, Thomas, F. Dodson, MD, Wayne E. Silva, MD and Thomas J. Vander Salm, MD
Publisher: Little, Brown and Co. UK Agents: Quest, Beckenham, 1984
Price: \$18.95 Soft spiral

This excellent manual has been written by members of the Surgical Teaching Staff of the University of Massachusetts Medical School and is a concise, clinically orientated review of a wide range of selected topics in General, Vascular and Cardio-thoracic surgery.

Each chapter reviews a clinical problem, giving appropriate scientific background information and an excellent list of Key references, each with a concise summary of the article. The text does not include any illustrations but each chapter is concise with clear type and the reader's interest is maintained. The chapter headings are clear and there is a good index. The book is 450 pages long.

I enjoyed reading this book. The subjects chosen are relevant and include many areas of controversy such as the management of blunt and penetrating abdominal injuries, breast cancer and asymptomatic vascular pathology. The style of writing is consistent, giving a balanced review with personal comments from each of the authors. The text does not cover operative surgery.

The under-graduate or surgical post-graduate looking for an inexpensive, pocket-sized manual to assist in their preparation for examinations will find this publication excellent value. The established surgeon and general practitioner will find the summary of problems presented stimulating. In addition, the excellent range of references will facilitate detailed background reading in each topic.

I can recommend this manual.

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