Distal radial fracture in gymnastics

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Sir

I thought I should write to you following an article in *British Journal of Sports Medicine* this year by Stuart and Briggs¹ about closed extensor tendon rupture and distal radial fracture with use of a gymnast's wrist support.

This injury is recognized in gymnastics when the grip grasps too tightly on the bar so that rotation is prevented. Distal radial fractures are well reported and, as Stuart and Briggs point out in their article, closed rupture of the tendon of extensor indicis is sometimes associated with distal fractures.

The reason for writing to you, I think, is in the final conclusion, under the discussion: 'We therefore stress the importance of proper lubrication of these and similar supports during gymnastic exercises'.

I am quite concerned about this advice.

Hand guards, as you know, are used for two reasons. One is to protect the gymnast's hands and the second is to increase grip and security, and I am very concerned that anyone reading this article would think that they should be lubricated, thereby reducing grip and putting the gymnast at risk of slipping off, which is not what we really want. I think that is bad advice. They should, of course, be properly chalked up and they should be used properly under correct supervision with correct coaching.

References

- 1 Stuart PR, Briggs PJ. Closed extensor tendon rupture and distal radial fracture with use of a gymnast's wrist support. *Br J Sports Med* 1993; 27: 92-3.