

Looking Over Your Shoulder
Combined Symposium of the British Institute of Musculoskeletal Medicine and
the Society of Orthopaedic Medicine at the London Hilton Metropole Hotel
7th December 2002

In her last visit overseas for at least two years, Australian physiotherapist Jenny McConnell gave two keynote lectures on the shoulder. The first lecture focused on the problem of traumatic and atraumatic multidirectional instability at the shoulder. After reminding the delegates that the dominant arm is a mobilising arm and is at risk of becoming unstable, Jenny proceeded to outline extensive rehabilitation regimes. The aims are to restore homeostasis and increase the patient's envelope of function. A key message was to remember the starting position of the humeral head before commencing treatment. The second lecture, titled "The older shoulder" looked at the frozen shoulder. Jenny emphasised the need to provide initial pain relief in the form of strapping in the irritable phase. This can be supplemented with mobilisation of the thoracic spine, gradually progressing to specific glenohumeral mobilisations as the pain settles down. In all these conditions the patient was responsible for maintaining progress with home exercise programmes, which should be simple and quick for patients to perform independently.

Orthopaedic surgeon Tim Bunker gave an overview on the procedure of shoulder arthroscopy. Stating, that in his experience, bursitis and tendinitis were not common shoulder pathologies, he focused on tears of the rotator cuff as being the primary lesions. He went on to provide fascinating video footage of surgical decompression and rotator cuff repair. Favouring the terminology "contracture" rather than frozen shoulder, he highlighted the link with Dupuytren's contracture in these patients.

Bryan English, a consultant in sports medicine, focused on the problems of shoulder pain in the throwing athlete's arm, specifically analysing the javelin thrower. Bryan discussed the mechanics of launching a javelin over 100 metres, supplementing his talk with video footage to both analyse the javelin thrower's action and amuse and entertain the audience!

Cathy Barrett, an extended scope practitioner from London, spoke about motor control instability at the shoulder. She explained how patients with subluxing shoulders could be placed in one of four categories depending on whether their problem was under voluntary control or not. Treatment programmes for these patients were discussed. She concluded that motor control dysfunction at corticospinal level can be modified with appropriate movement therapy.

Aspects of shoulder morphology were presented by clinical lecturer Peter Dangerfield. Commencing with the development of the shoulder at embryonic level, Peter went on to outline the key features at the shoulder and the consequences when these systems fail.

The whole Symposium was considered to be a hugely informative and enjoyable day by the 450 delegates who attended. This Symposium plays a major role in the calendar of events for all clinicians whose interest is in the world of musculoskeletal medicine. Next year's symposium, on 6 December 2003, will focus on Pain, with Gordon Waddell presenting the keynote lecture. If you cannot wait for then for further

expansion of your orthopaedic knowledge, then the SOM's annual Conference at Loughborough University on 28 June 2003 is not to be missed. Entitled, A Question of Sport, it will focus on sports medicine.