

Splinting in Plastic Surgery Hand Trauma Setting

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Abstract : Injuries to the hand account for 20% of all emergency department attendances, with an estimated annual treatment cost of over £100 million in the UK. Functional impairments as a result of hand injuries often necessitate absence from employment, resulting in reduced productivity estimated to incur an additional £600m loss to the UK economy. Appropriate and early management is vital to preserve anatomy, prevent stiffness and allow function. The initial assessment and management of hand injuries are usually undertaken by junior staff, many of whom have little or no training or experience in splinting hand fractures. In our plastic surgery department at Stoke Mandeville hospital Buckinghamshire trust, we carried out an audit project to detect errors in hand splinting in the period between April 2022 and July 2022 and find out measures to support junior doctors, nurses and hand therapists in providing the best possible care for hand trauma patients. Our standards were The British Society for Surgery of the Hand (BSSH) standard of care in hand trauma, AO surgery reference and Stoke Mandeville hospital hand therapy mini protocol Feb 2022 During the period of 4 months, 5 cases were identified. Two cases of wrong splint choice, two cases of early removal of the splint and one tight splint that required change. In order to avoid those mistakes, a training program was given to junior doctors and nurses in collaboration with the hand therapy team regarding ways of splinting the hand in different injuries like fractures, tendons injuries, muscle injuries and ligamentous injuries. In addition to, a poster hung in the examination rooms and theatres to help junior doctors reach the correct decision.

Keywords : splinting, hand trauma, plastic surgery, tendon injury, hand fracture

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