



Preface

Challenges in Hand Surgery



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Hand challenges! This issue of the *Clinics in Plastic Surgery* illustrates some of the thoughts that are part of our creative work, both in what we do and why we do it. It includes articles that examine outcomes, patient values and decisions, evaluation tools, and clinical research tools.

Other articles address specific understanding of a spectrum of surgical hand practice. Functional MRI is shedding new light on cortical plasticity. Closed reductions of hand fractures are still a useful option. Exciting advances are being made in our understanding of bone degeneration and regeneration. Alterations in tendons have been documented with the fluoroquinolone antibiotics. Some hand transplantations have survived long periods with currently available immunosuppressive approaches. Judicious use of skin grafts and skin flaps contribute to burned hand rehabilitation and to challenging web contractures from any cause. Nerve injuries continue to challenge us with

nerve gap bridging opportunities and chronic regional pain syndrome. Work-related hand injury trends are viewed from the perspective of Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

There is not a specific article on the art of medicine, but it is clear from these articles that progress has been made in studying and quantifying some of the aspects of care that contribute to the "art." Surgeons have the wonderful possibility of tailoring their treatment to the whole individual. These articles help illuminate how far we have come along that path, yet some of the challenges remain open for solutions. Surgeons are well aware that is not enough to graft a burned hand or minimize deformity of a congenital malformation. It can also be important that the hand not be kept in a pocket and that it be useful.

It is hoped that these articles will motivate others to be innovative in advancing our understanding of the results of hand surgery and care.