

the subject of any strict statistical treatment. In this sense this is not a "scientific paper". This highlights the problem of communication in this field between the consumer on the one hand and the professionals involved on the other. However, it is essential that such communication be fostered if energies and resources are to be channelled in the most fruitful direction. It is hoped that against this background the views contained herein will prove useful, highlighting as they do the opinions of a substantial number of patients.

H. C. Chadderton

Notice of Technical Meetings and Seminars.

1979, Jan. 25-27, AAOP Round-Up Seminar, Konover Hotel, Miami Beach, Florida.

1979, May 22-26, Orthopaedic-Technik 79, International, Exhibition Center/Convention Building, Nuremberg, Germany.

1979, August 26-31, Interagency Conference on Rehabilitation Engineering, Atlanta Hilton, Atlanta, Georgia.

1979, September 26-30, AOPA National Assembly, Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.

1980, September 28-October 4, Third World Congress (ISPO), Bologna, Italy.



Vacuum Forming

In an article I wrote in 1974 on vacuum forming of sheet plastics¹ I erred in stating that the first reference to vacuum forming of sheet plastics in orthotics and prosthetics was a paper by Gordon Yates in 1968². I should have remembered that Dana Street presented this concept in Volume 1 of the *Orthopedic Appliances Atlas*³ for the fabrication of cervical orthoses. This is certainly an excellent example of how long it takes to get a technological development from the idea stage to fairly widespread application.

In the time since my article was published in "Orthotics and Prosthetics" vacuum forming of sheet plastics has been used more and more by private practitioners in both orthotics and prosthetics.

Although the educational programs, with a few exceptions, seem to have been very slow in teaching vacuum forming techniques, use of the technique seems to be expanding, owing in part to the several workshops sponsored

by the American Academy of Orthotists and Prosthetists.

Every process and system has its limitations, and we all recognize that each design in orthotics and prosthetics represents a compromise, but as time goes on the gaps that engender compromise are narrowed as experience is gained.

Although the "Orthotics and Prosthetics Clinic Newsletter" has discussed several aspects of vacuum forming in the relatively recent past, in view of what seems to be a rapidly expanding program it seems appropriate that another survey be made concerning the uses of and problems encountered by the private practitioners.

A questionnaire on this subject is included in this issue. It will be appreciated greatly if each recipient will complete the enclosed form and add any comments he or she feels that will be helpful in improving service to patients.

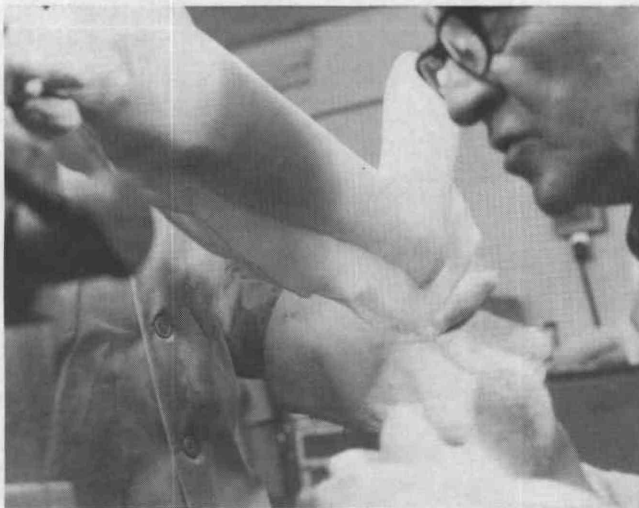
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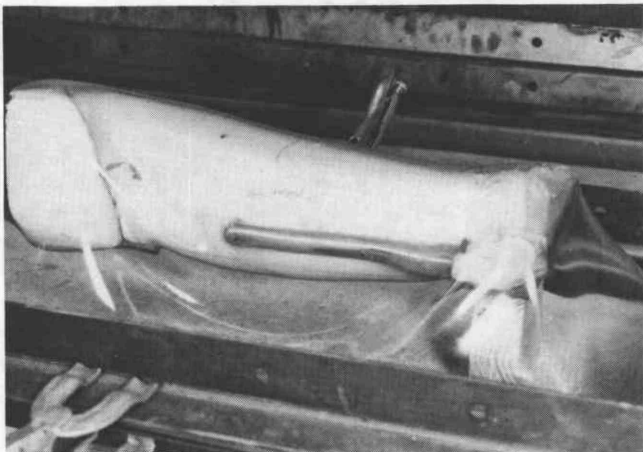
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2. "A Method for the Provision of Lightweight Aesthetic Orthopedic Appliances," Gordon Yates, *Orthopaedics*, 1:2:153-162, 1968.
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Vacuum-forming a shank for a below-knee prosthesis using the hand-drape.



Vacuum-forming thigh section of knee-ankle-foot prosthesis using automatic machinery.

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Vacuum-forming a below-knee socket with use of a platen and form for holding plastic sheet.