

NYU OFFERS NEW COURSE IN UPPER EXTREMITY PROSTHETICS

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In fabricating an upper extremity prosthesis there are two aspects of the prosthetist's work which require considerable expertness if the results are to be satisfactory. The first of these is the matter of socket fitting. The molding of a wax check socket to take full advantage of stump contours, to provide socket stability and yet allow unrestricted range of motion, and most important, to achieve comfort are matters that require a high order of experience and skill.

The second area in which the prosthetist's work is of extreme significance is that of fabrication of the harness and control system. Proper suspension and control of the prosthesis, not to mention the factor of comfort, are totally dependent on the skill and experience which the prosthetist brings to this matter.

In a new course which New York University offered for the first time from October 17 to 28, 1960, these two aspects of the fabrication of upper extremity prostheses were the exclusive concern of the students and their two instructors, Ivan Dillee, C.P., and the author. This course was originally designed to meet the needs of the many prosthetists who utilize central fabrication facilities for arm work but also are directly responsible for fitting and harnessing the prosthesis no matter where it was made. To accomplish this purpose each student in the two-week course, measured, casted, and fitted check sockets to six different amputees including a long B/E, a short B/E, a very short B/E, two A/E's and a S/D. In addition each student made a B/E figure 8 harness, two A/E figure 8 harnesses, one A/E chest strap harness and one S/D harness.

The students reaction to their experience in this course was universally favorable. They felt that they were now well qualified to take proper measurements and casts and to achieve proper fittings through the fabrication of wax check sockets. The students also felt that when they received prostheses from central fabrication facilities they would be able to install harness and control systems with assurance.

EXCELLENT REVIEW OF NEW IDEAS

It was also pointed out that, in addition to being of benefit to those limb facilities which do not do their own fabrication, the course would serve as an excellent review for the many prosthetists who had taken the upper extremity course as long as 5 to 8 years ago. It must be remembered that it was at least that many years ago that upper extremity courses were first introduced and popularized. Perhaps other prosthetists may feel a need to review those newer ideas in upper extremity harnessing and fitting which require true art rather than simple mechanical skills. If so, this new course serves as a valuable avenue for such practice.

New York University is planning to offer one additional such course this academic year from February 6 to 17, 1961. There are still several vacancies in this class and interested persons should write to Dr. Sidney Fishman, New York University, Prosthetics Education, 342 East 26th Street, New York 10, N. Y. for further information about the course and for application blanks. The course number is 7416B and the title is "Upper Extremity Fitting and Harnessing."