Vacuum Forming

In an article I wrote in 1974 on vacuum forming of sheet plastics 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 1968. I should have remembered that Dana Street presented this concept in Volume 1 of the Orthopedic Appliances Atlas 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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REFERENCES CITED


ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

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


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