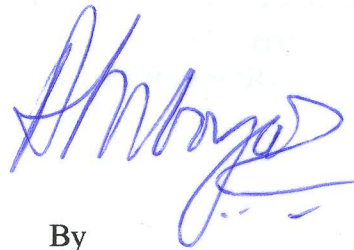


**MANAGEMENT OF OPEN FRACTURES OF THE LOWER EXTREMITY.
HOW VACUUM SEALING TECHNIQUE AND EXTERNAL FIXATION
AFFECT THE OUTCOME.**



By
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MSC
ORTHOPAEDIC/ TRAUMATOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
DAR-ES-SALAAM**

UNIVERSITY OF DAR ES SALAAM

1997

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that he has read and hereby recommend for acceptance by the University of Dar es salaam a dissertation entitled:

Management of open fractures of the lower extremity. How vacuum sealing technique and external fixation affect the outcome, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science Orthopaedic and Traumatology.



Dr. L. M. Museru
(SUPERVISOR)

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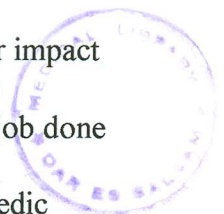
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Sarah N. Mboya and my children Lilian N. Mboya and Loveness N. Mboya for their support, love, understanding, and great patience during my long absence while pursuing my training in Orthopaedics and Traumatology.

ABSTRACT

TITLE: Management of open fractures of the lower extremity. How vacuum sealing technique and external fixation system affect the outcome.

SUBJECT: Patients with fractures of the lower extremity in whom thorough wound debridement, copious irrigation, vacuum sealing application and external fixation was the main stay of treatment.

OBJECTIVE: To study and analyse the quality of various operative management of soft tissues and skeletal injuries of the lower extremity.

SUMMARY:

Amputation has been the main stay of treating open fractures up to the middle of the 19th century. This had resulted in considerable disability and great misery, especially in developing countries in terms of poor rehabilitation, and problems of prosthesis procurement. High infection rate, prolonged healing times and hospital stay, have greatly hindered a normal life in victims with severe open fractures. Technology development in the western community today, has tremendously revolutionised open fracture treatment not only from amputation to limb salvage but also development of methods which prevent or lower infection rate, achieve short healing time short, duration of hospital stay, as well as short occupational re-intergration time.

Among 116 patients studied at the Traumatology department of the University of Ulm Germany, about 90% were treated by serial vacuum sealing after standard and serial debridement with thorough irrigation. Prophylactic antibiotic (cefuroxime) was administered to all patients and external fixation

was performed in 30% of patients, of which 16% were the Ilizarov ring fixation. Under the above protocol, the overall amputation rate was as low as 6%. It is concluded that the above protocol of open fracture treatment is associated with a high rate of limb salvage, low complication rate, short healing time and short duration of hospital stay. That undeniable fact outweighs the relatively expensive procurement of such surgical material necessary to establish this important protocol at the Muhimbili Orthopedic Institute.

CONTENTS

Title	Page
Certification	(i)
Declaration and Copyright	(ii)
Acknowledgement	(iii)
Dedication	(v)
Abstract	(vi)
Table of Contents	(viii)
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Definition	
1.2 Historical perspective	
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6
2.1 Aetiology and mechanism	
2.2 Clinical anatomy	
2.3 Pathophysiology of musculoskeletal injuries	
2.4 Classification and score system	
2.5 TREATMENT	19
2:5:1 Philosophy and concepts	
2.5.2 ACUTE PHASE	20

- (i) Prehospital and emergency room care
- (ii) Tetanus prophylaxis
- (iii) Antibiotic administration
 - (a) Systemic antibiotics
 - (b) Antibiotic impregnated beads or local antibiotics
- (iv) Orthopaedic intervention
- (v) Preparation for surgical debridement
- (vi) Irrigation and debridement
- (vii) Debridement

2.5.3 AMPUTATION AND LIMB SALVAGE

31

- (a) Immediate
- (b) Early
- (c) Late

2.5.4 FRACTURE STABILISATION

33

- (i) Importance of skeletal stability
- (ii) Casts, Traction, and Pins.
- (iii) External Fixation (EF)
 - (a) General aspect
 - (b) Postoperative management
 - (c) Indications
 - (d) Ilizarov ring fixator
- (iv) Internal Fixation (IF)

- (a) Wires and screws
- (b) Intramedullary nailing
- (c) Plates

2.5.5 DEFINITIVE WOUND MANAGEMENT

44

(i) Primary options for definitive wound management

- (a) Primary closure
- (b) Wound left open
- (c) Primary closure with autogenous skin graft or local or microvascularised flaps.

(ii) Secondary options for definitive wound management

- (a) Delayed primary closure by suture
- (b) Delayed autogenous skin graft or local or microvascularised flap
- (c) Secondary closure by suture or graft
- (d) Healing by secondary intention
- (e) Temporary split thickness skin graft
- (f) Other Options

2.5.6 MANAGEMENT OF BONE LOSS

54

(i) Non Vascularised Bone Graft (NVBG)

 Cancellous and Cortical graft

(ii) Vascularised Bone Graft (NBV)

- (a) Pedicle Graft (PG) e.g Ipsilateral fibular transfer and

tibiofibular synostosis

(b) Free Vascularised Bone Graft

(c) Ilizarov technique

2.5.7 Reconstructive Phase	60
2.5.8 Rehabilitative Phase	60
3. OBJECTIVES	62
(i) Main Objective	
(ii) Specific Objectives	
4 METHODOLOGY	63
(i) Patients and Method	
(ii) Questionnaire	
5 RESULTS	64
6 DISCUSSION	86
7 CONCLUSION	102
8 REFERENCES	105
9. APPENDIX	128

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 DEFINITION

An open fracture is one in which there is a break in the skin and underlying soft tissue and this leads directly into or communicates with the fracture and its hematoma^{35, 43}. "Compound fracture" is a non specific term and it is now rarely used⁴³. Sometimes the diagnosis of an open fracture can pose a problem because the wound may be a considerable distance from the fracture site^{38,47}. However when a wound occurs in the same limb segment as a fracture, the fracture should be considered open until proved otherwise⁴⁶. The prognosis in open fractures is determined primarily by the amount of devitalised soft tissue and by the level and type of bacterial contamination^{10, 33, 46}. These two factors are the primary determinants of the outcome.

1.2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Over the issuing centuries an open fracture meant not only amputation but also death from sepsis ^{10,43,55,140,229}. The surgery of open fractures remained until the middle of nineteenth century, as the surgery of amputation⁵⁴. Amputation itself carried a very high mortality rate usually from haemorrhage and sepsis. In 1842, Malgaigne¹⁴⁷ found that the overall mortality rate for amputation was 30%, whereas for major amputation was 52%, and for the thigh alone 60%. In the Franco-Germany war of 1870 to 1871 the mortality rate for all open fractures was 41%⁴³. In the American civil war of

