

## Pre-Conference CME Session 2

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### **An overview of spinal cord injuries**

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Spinal cord injuries (SCI) may have a wide variety of clinical presentations depending on the location and severity of injury. Spinal cord injuries affect approximately 40 per one million persons in unselected populations and are commonly due to road traffic accidents, falls and interpersonal violence. In order to minimize the potentially devastating sequelae of SCI, emergency healthcare personnel should institute measures to limit further injury and this should be followed with early diagnosis and definitive management. We review the important SCI management concepts in a Caribbean setting.

### **Inguinal hernia repair techniques: what is best practice?**

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Inguinal herniae continue to be one of the most commonly performed operations throughout the Caribbean. There is still significant variation in operative techniques and the surgical approaches that are in use to repair inguinal herniae. We review the existing data on inguinal hernia repair to determine best practices in the Caribbean setting.

### **Management of open fractures: updates**

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The management of open fractures continues to provide challenges for the orthopaedic surgeon. Despite the improvements in technology and surgical techniques, rates of infection and non-union are still troublesome. The objectives of treatment of open fractures include prevention of infection, promotion of soft-tissue and fracture healing and restoration of function to the injured extremity. Open fractures usually result from high energy trauma and occur in one-third of cases of multiple injured patients. It is, therefore, important to initially manage the patient in accordance with the Advanced Trauma Life Support principles. The immediate and early management usually affects the ultimate outcome. The specific treatment for the open fracture includes initial stabilization, tetanus prophylaxis, systemic antibiotics, prompt surgical debridement, copious irrigation, fracture fixation, timely wound closure and thorough rehabilitation. Extensive soft-tissue injury requires the collaboration between the orthopaedic and plastic surgeons. Certain patients may benefit from local antibiotic therapy, vacuum-assisted closure, bone grafting or other adjunctive therapies. There is still controversy on the optimal antibiotic regimen, type of irrigation fluid along with method of delivery, and the timing of closure. Adherence to the above principles can help surgeons provide optimal care for their patients and assist in an early return to function.

### **Screening for prostate cancer: a Caribbean imperative**

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Prostate cancer is not only the most common cancer affecting Caribbean men but it is also the principal cause of cancer-related mortality. In fact the Caribbean region accounts

for the highest recorded prostate cancer death rate in the world. Compared to American men, Caribbean men present with more advanced disease heralded by the presence of symptoms and some studies suggest that at comparative stages the disease appears to be biologically more aggressive. With an ageing population, the incidence and mortality from prostate cancer is expected to worsen. This will result in an increase in preventable human suffering and a greater financial and care-giving burden to already economically burdened societies. Screening for prostate cancer is the intervention that can make an immediate impact on the disease. It has been demonstrated to result in a

downward stage migration, a decline in incidence and an improvement in prostate cancer-specific mortality. Prostate specific antigen based screening for prostate cancer is not without its disadvantages that include possible over-detection and over-treatment of the disease. These may be minimized by screening only high-risk men and having active surveillance as a treatment option. Screening for prostate cancer as a method of reducing the burden of the disease should be given urgent and serious consideration by Caribbean governments. Unless this dialogue takes place urgently and is followed by rapid implementation, Caribbean men are likely to continue dying from this preventable disease.