

REPORTS OF NOTE

NIH Consensus Statement

Volume 12, Number 5
September 12-14, 1994

Total Hip Replacement

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Total hip replacement (THR) is one of this century's most successful surgical procedures. The goals of performing the surgery are to provide relief of pain and improvement of mobility for people with deteriorated, arthritic and severely injured hips. Currently, 120,000 artificial hip joints are implanted annually. New technology and advances in surgical procedures have diminished the risk associated with THR and improved the immediate and long-term outcomes.

Despite the success of THR, there are concerns regarding the eventual breakdown and loosening of the implants. Questions remain concerning which prosthetic designs and materials are most effective for specific groups of patients and which surgical techniques and rehabilitation approaches produce the best long-term outcomes. These questions and concerns were addressed at a recent National Institutes of Health Consensus Development Conference on *Total Hip Replacement*. The conference was organized by the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases together with the Office of Medical Applications of Research. A 13-member consensus panel made observations and recommendations after the 16 day conference.

Long-term studies are under way to determine the incidence and rate of implant breakdown. Further study of education and rehabilitation will help establish which pre- and post-operative

procedures are best for particular patients.

The panel also recommended the establishment of regional and national registries to collect data on all THRs. The registries should also identify risk factors for poor outcomes relating to the implant, procedure and patient characteristics that may lead to needed modifications and improved outcomes.

NIH Consensus Program Information Service

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Antibiotic Resistance

There is increased concern about common disease-producing organisms that are becoming more resistant to antibiotics once thought to be effective. The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) recently convened a 35-member task force to discuss the problems caused by resistant pathogens that result in morbidity and mortality and the need for new, more expensive antibiotics. There is also a growing threat to food production and the food industry in the United States. The threat of global resistance to antibiotics has never been greater. The ASM task force researched the prevalence of antibiotic resistance, major factors affecting the emergence of resistant microorganisms and future research needs for monitoring resistance.

The report, *Antibiotic Resistance*, outlines some startling examples of infections from resistant organisms. In the United States, more than 90% of strains of *Staphylococcus aureus* are resistant to penicillin. In 1990, data became available showing that antimicrobial prescriptions are most commonly given for common paediatric infections, such as otitis media, bronchitis and sinusitis. The organisms responsible for otitis media have developed resistance to 'first line' antibiotics and now require newly developed drugs. There is also a growing concern related to animal health, because animals are developing a resistance to antibiotics, which will affect food production in this country.

The task force recommends the establishment of a national antibiotic resistance surveillance system in animals, humans and food products. Education should be strengthened in the areas of infectious diseases and antibiotics to reduce the inappropriate use of antibiotics. Better guidelines should be established to reduce the spread of infections and antibiotic-resistant microorganisms in hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers and food production industries.

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TRENDS

U.S. MEDICAL SCHOOL
APPLICANTS, MATRICULANTS,
GRADUATES, 1994

Each year the Association of American Medical Colleges compiles nationwide data on applicant and matriculant characteristics, academic progress, residency appointments, educational debt, and choice of specialties, as well as the practice and career goals of medical school graduates.

The 1994 edition of *TRENDS* provides additional information on the patterns of minority students' demographic distribution, factors affecting the students' decisions to attend medical school and the schools that they chose, and trends in medical school drop-out rates, graduation rates, and income expectations of graduates.

The purposes of each edition of *TRENDS* are to characterize the national medical student body, to determine the relationships that are important to the success of the achievement of both institutional and national goals in medical education, and to provide demographic information across the course of undergraduate medical education.

TRENDS reports changes in its annual editions depending upon new information that becomes available. The Association of American Medical Colleges welcomes any technical questions and requests for further data elaboration.

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