Advancements in classification, treatment and outcome of radial head fractures

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Preface

Thierry continues the tradition of the Amsterdam-Boston collaborative. I know that my PhD students don’t arrive with the skills they leave with, but as I write this preface I can’t clearly remember what things were like when Thierry started—perhaps because my pride is so great in how they are finishing. Thierry is juggling a dozen active projects at a time—I can rely on him for energy, skill, and enthusiasm. He will end up with over double the number of publications than will be part of his PhD thesis including papers that branch in the appropriate use of pathology testing of ganglion cysts, surgical site infections, and measures of quality and safety and how they are influenced by patient complexity including transfer from another hospital.

To complete the PhD work Thierry had to bring to fruition the quantitative 3D-CT process. That required fine-tuning both the technical aspects and the methods of statistical analysis. It also required the invention of a method for estimating intact bone volumes in which Thierry all succeeded.

Thierry single handedly brought the Science of Variation Group to fruition. When the web developer hit problem after problem, Thierry discovered a way to use readily available commercial web survey tools to do the job cheaper, easier, and very reliably. The international enthusiasm for the work of this group is really heartening to dedicated scientists such as Thierry and I expect our collaborative will make quick work of many of the current questions about observer variation. Which of course will only raise new questions—but that’s what we’ve trained Thierry for.

The process of executing so many scientific experiments, presenting them publically and then getting them published in peer-reviewed scientific journals hones the scientific skills. The mark of success is the enthusiasm and confidence with which a graduating PhD student such as Thierry takes on new projects and also takes on the role of a leader and manager for new PhD students, short-term visitors, and even some of the local residents and fellows.

It gives me great pride to see Thierry’s abilities in action and of course my hope is that we will continue to collaborate throughout our careers, and that he will always share my love for science. Science is what humans developed to keep from fooling themselves and to keep from being fooled by others. A useful tool to be sure and science’s accomplishments are undeniable, but when the data are counter-intuitive—when they challenge our preferences and customs—many of us become uncomfortable. Not so Thierry. Having completed his PhD, Thierry now has the confidence, the comfort, and the capability to pursue more experiments, and I expect his contributions to our understanding and management of illness to be substantial, and his efforts are greatly admired and appreciated.

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