



findings, the senate of the Royal College of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland has already recommended that surgeons undergo professional review every five years.

Most physicians will recognize some legitimacy in what Priest preaches. They may disagree on the extent of the problem and on whether the solution lies in self-regulation or in public disclosure. Where you stand on this issue rather depends on where you sit. Nevertheless, we only have to look at the far-reaching impact of similar cases in the UK to realize that this issue will not go away. Public disclosure is coming to Canada. Hospital performance report cards will soon be published in Ontario. This is a book that deserves to be widely read.

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One thousand words



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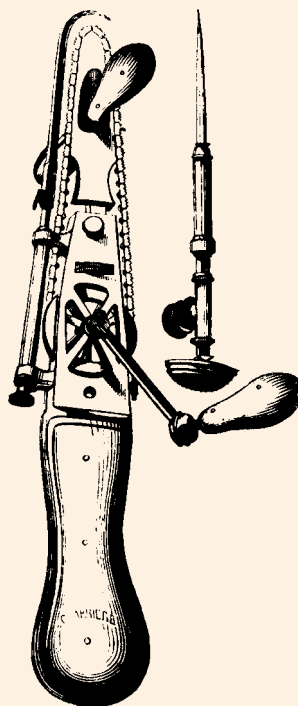
Operation in progress at a travelling medical clinic in rural Alberta in the 1920s.

Image of the profession

The osteotome

The impetus for a new field often comes from new technology. Radiology evolved within a few years after Röntgen's discovery of x-rays in 1895 and the Curies' discovery of radium in 1898. Orthopedics became a specialty with the help of a new instrument, the osteotome, invented around 1830 by the German Bernard Heine.¹ This illustration from a contemporary inventory of surgical tools² shows clearly that this clever master of prosthetics had in fact invented the chain saw. The links of the chain carried small cutting teeth with the edges set at an angle; the chain was moved around a guiding blade by turning the handle of the sprocket wheel.

The osteotome made it easy to cut through hard bone without the impact of hammer and chisel or the jolts of a reciprocating saw. The surgeon skilled in its use could now resect bone without splintering it, perform craniotomies with smooth-edged



Heine's osteotome as illustrated in Gaujot and Spillman.²

holes, and cut in topographies that did not permit access to a circular saw — without damage to surround-

ing tissue, all by himself, and with a minimum of force and time. Heine became an instant celebrity and was invited to demonstrate his invention at clinics all over Europe and even at the Court of the Czar. In 1834 he won the coveted Prix Montyon of the Académie des Sciences in Paris. For his studies on bone regeneration, the University of Würzburg appointed him professor of orthopedics in 1838, the first such chair anywhere, although he had never studied medicine. Heine died nine years later of tuberculosis at age 46.

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