

## LETTERS TO EDITORIAL

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### Letter to editor of the journal «Orthopaedics, Traumatology and Prosthetic»

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Dear editors of the «Orthopaedics, Traumatology and Prosthetics» journal,

I have read with interest the article by I. M. Garbuznyak and A. M. Hrytsenko «Features of surgical correction of various forms of hand syndactyly in children. Retrospective assessment of own experience of treatment», published in the second issue of the journal in 2021 [1]. However, one aspect caused some misunderstanding. The Introduction section on page 6 mentions a method of distraction to create excess skin that is fundamentally different from other ways to eliminate syndactyly. I was surprised to learn that «...the article describes a method of soft tissue distraction using «magic cube»/«cube fix», which is employed in total and complex forms of syndactyly or pansyndactyly with bone fusion on the background of Apert syndrome according to the method by Dr. R. Habenicht [2–5]».

We can agree that R. Habenicht proposed to use for distraction his device, which, in my opinion, is much inferior in design and functionality to other devices used for the same purpose in any form of syndactyly. I will add that R. Habenicht began to use the apparatus and method of distraction to eliminate syndactyly only in 1995–1996. But to say that the method of distraction in the treatment of syndactyly was proposed by R. Habenicht seems to me not entirely correct and fair to those researchers who were indeed the first in the world to develop and use distraction in this clinical situation.

In their study V. I. Shevtsov and M. Yu. Danilkin [6] clearly state that the external fixator for increasing the volume of soft tissues was first used in 1978 [7]. In the list of references to the mentioned findings there is an article by O. N. Gudushauri, L. A. Tvaliashvili (1983), which describes the use of the distraction method of preparation for skin plastic surgery in syndactyly [8]. The statement of V. I. Shevtsov and M. Yu. Danilkin does not cast doubt, as the actual method of distraction to create excess skin to elimi-

nate syndactyly and the device for its implementation has indeed been proposed by Soviet orthopedists-traumatologists the first in the world, which is documented.

In 1981, the author's certificate of the USSR for the invention «Method of treatment of soft-tissue syndactyly of the hand» was issued to Academicians O. M. Gudushauri and L. A. Tvaliashvili [7]. In 1983 L. A. Tvaliashvili and G. A. Dzhalalishvili also received a copyright certificate of the USSR for the invention of the original apparatus for finger distraction in syndactyly [9]. In addition, in 1985 Tamara Oleksiivna Tvaliashvili defended her Candidate's thesis on «Distraction method of preparation for local skin repair of the fingers in syndactyly» at Kharkiv Professor M. I. Sytenko Institute of Orthopaedics and Traumatology [10].

In 1987, O. N. Gudushauri and L. A. Tvaliashvili were awarded the title of laureate of the USSR State Prize «For the creation of methods for restoring the function of the hand with the help of transosseous fixation devices and reconstructive operations».

In my opinion, the priority in creating a method of instrument distraction of soft tissues to eliminate syndactyly belongs entirely to domestic orthopedic traumatologists.

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