Author's response to reviews

Title: Treatment of distal tibial fractures with the Ilizarov external fixator A prospective observational study in 39 consecutive patients

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Skövde (Sweden), the 12th February 2012

Dear Sirs;

I´m sending you a paper that I would like to be published in your journal. Take note, please, that today we also submitted another manuscript parallel to this one about proximal metaphyseal tibial fractures with the Ilizarov method. In this study two different types of distal metaphyseal tibial fractures (intra and extra-articular) are treated with the same technique. For the more severe fractures were a staged protocol normally is recommended it was possible to operate early without compromising the results. All, these fractures were instructed for immediate mobilization with unrestricted weight-bearing. It could be argued that even if the patients were allowed weight bearing one does not know to what extent they comply. Therefore the patients were also included in a gait analysis study of patients with different types of tibial fractures. The preliminary results from this study confirm that the patients are able to load the fractured limb. To use the ring fixators also in more easily treated cases promotes the learning curve so that it is also easier to apply in the more complicated cases where there is a definitive advantage with this technique. Even if two years follow-up after fracture eventually show further improvement, this is still very early to evaluate secondary arthrosis. We have nice pre- and postoperative films that could be used as illustration. However, as the placement of the wires and the rings are depending on the comminution and extension of the fracture it is difficult to illustrate the technique in just a pair of pictures. If you should find it valuable we could send you several examples from which you could choose the one you find most appropriate.

Thanking for your kind attention.

Sincerely yours;