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A grommet trainer

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VENTILATION of the middle-ear by means of a grommet has become increasingly popular in the management of secretory otitis media over the last 25 years and is now the commonest operative procedure in otological practice. Paradise (1977) estimated that about 2 million grommets were manufactured throughout the world each year. It is inevitable therefore that a large number of these operations are performed by junior Ear, Nose and Throat staff. Indeed the procedure is generally a trainee's first exposure to micro-surgical technique. This simulator is designed to provide an opportunity for the trainee to develop and practise the

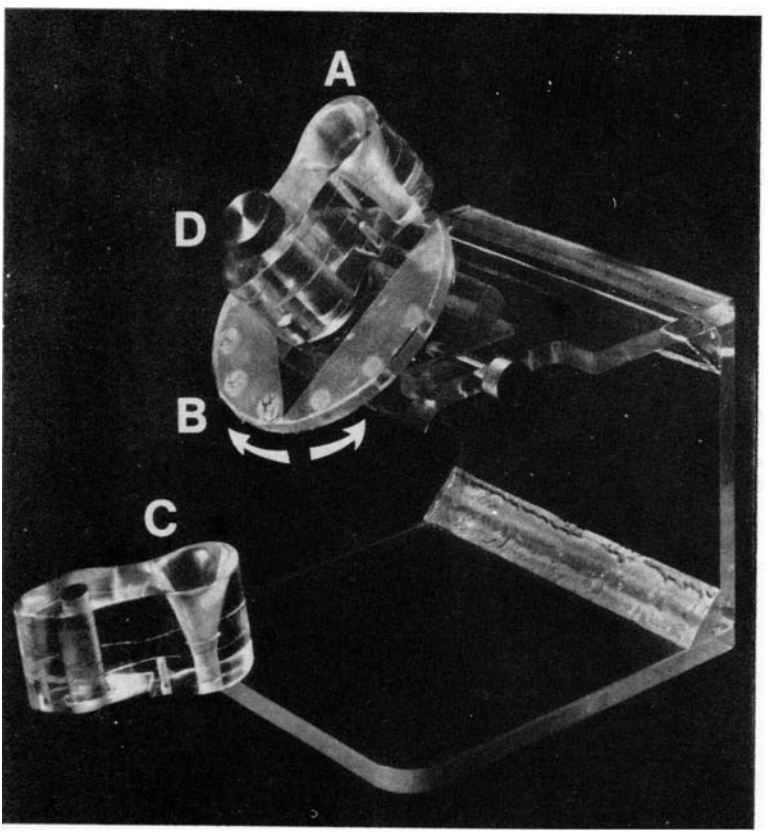


FIG. 1

(a) Speculum block.
(b) Circular plate.
(c) Alternative block with smaller diameter.
(d) Knob for changing blocks.

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skills necessary for competent performance of the procedure before embarking on operations on patients.

The simulator (Fig. 1) is made of perspex and is composed essentially of two parts, a speculum block and a circular plate. The holes on the circular plate which have been varied in size are covered with adhesive tape in order to simulate the tympanic membrane. While different types of tape may be utilized we have found that micropore most closely creates a situation similar to that encountered in real life. The circular plate can be rotated to bring a fresh 'tympanic membrane' under the speculum block. The plate is fitted with click stops to ensure a positive positioning. An alternative block is provided so that a smaller diameter of 'speculum' can be readily substituted if required. This is achieved by unscrewing the knob on the top of the block, and lifting off the original block. The narrower access thus provided enables the degree of difficulty to be increased as dexterity improves. If preferred, an ordinary aural speculum can be inserted within the speculum block.

While the trainer can never be a substitute for a real life situation we have found it to be of considerable value in helping a trainee to develop familiarity with the instruments and to acquire the delicate touch and feel which are so essential to successful performance of the procedure in the human being.

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