

In any case, he describes erection as “the great equalizer. When you compare men with shorter penises with men who have longer penises, the percentage of elongation to produce an erection is greater for those with shorter penises. This should be a source of reassurance to women . . . and to men.”

Bain’s study confirms abundant field research in this area, most of which has involved nonrandomized case series, anecdotal reporting and decidedly unscientific methodology.

— *C.J. Brown*

Tool Time for MDs

Most physicians have heard a tale or 2 about a colleague who used a Black and Decker drill to relieve an epidural bleed in a patient’s skull. This is not mere legend, a recent article in the *Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine* points out (3;1998:225-7). An article, “The occasional burr hole,” looks at Canadian Tire-type

surgery and provides step-by-step instructions á la Bob Villa on how to drill a hole in the cranium.

Dr. Keith MacLellan advocates a sense of historical perspective. “Drilling a hole in the head is just the boring (sorry) start to most neurosurgical days,” he writes. “Trephination was practised safely in the Stone Age. So relax.”

First, you need the equipment: a sharp-pointed drill (penetrator) to make a hole in the outer table of the cranium and a blunt-ended burr hole bit to complete the drilling through the skull and minimize the chance of penetrating the dura.

If the drill and 2 bits aren’t available in your hospital, head for the local hardware store. MacLellan found what he was looking for at Canadian Tire: the 1/2-inch, high speel steel drill bit (catalogue # 54-3032-8) cost him \$8.49. Amazingly, the bit instantly morphed into a medical instrument when he brought it to the hospital. If sup-

plies are really limited, the entire process can be carefully done with a penetrator and carpenter’s drill.

Not only is the equipment effective, it’s also a money-saver — hospital administrators take note.



Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine

Resourceful physicians can use a penetrator from Canadian Tire and complete the job with a surgical burr-hole bit.

CODED LANGUAGE AND MEDICAL OBITUARIES — *What they write (and what they mean): character (a tiresome old man); perfectionist (an obsessional neurotic); assertive (a bully); plainspoken (offensive); did not suffer fools gladly (very offensive); a man of strong opinions (a bigot); charming (dim, but smiled a lot); fond of the good things of life (a drunk).*

— *From A Sceptic’s Medical Dictionary by Michael O’Donnell, BMJ Publishing Group, London (available through the CMA Member Service Centre, 888 855-2555).*