

Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis: 70 % agreement in expert opinion?

R. Gunzburg

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In this issue we bring together a number of articles dedicated to the understanding, prevention and treatment of adolescent idiopathic scoliosis.

I tend to adhere to the opinion of Sackett et al. [1] that evidence-based medicine in its fullest sense results from the merger between personal clinical experience and the best available external knowledge, most reliably found in peer-review journals. This external knowledge, in turn, comes mostly from randomized controlled trials, literature meta-analyses and registry-based studies. Clinical experience alone is not enough and in the absence of other input can become quickly outdated. However, clinicians cannot rely on external evidence alone; such evidence may be inapplicable to or inappropriate for a particular individual. In this issue of the *European Spine Journal* we have such a peer-reviewed study informing us that in the absence of hard-core evidence, expert opinion seems to reach 70 % agreement (De Kleuver et al. [2]). The authors are to be commended for their study. Expert opinion is based on the assimilation by an individual of his/her personal experience combined with what he/she learned on the one hand from the medical literature (the more evidence based, the better) and on the other hand from colleagues.

Here, I would like to throw the cat amongst the pigeons and suggest a potential bias to consider. Is there a possibility that we are overly influenced by the great speakers, the ‘rock stars’ of our profession? Interviewing a group of experts who all just attended the same international conference may bring a consensus that is unwittingly biased towards one individual’s opinion.

The miscellany presented in this issue underlines how difficult it is to get good evidence. The best we can do is to carry on investigation, comparison, enter data in registries and publish in peer-reviewed journals.

Conflict of interest None.

References

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2. De Kleuver M et al (2014) Optimal surgical care for adolescent idiopathic scoliosis: an international consensus. *Eur Spine J*. doi:10.1007/s00586-014-3356-1

R. Gunzburg (✉)
Cavell Spine Centre, Edith Cavell Clinic, Edith Cavell Street 32,
1180 Brussels, Belgium
e-mail: robert@gunzburg.be