

“This Bair is not her Teddy”

To the Editor:

A 32-yr-old woman was mauled by a grizzly bear while planting trees in the north-eastern region of British Columbia for a reforestation company. Reconstructive surgery was performed two weeks after the accident. A nerve graft (from the opposite leg) and muscle free flap (from latissimus dorsi) were used to reconstruct the major soft tissue loss of her right leg. Decortication of the skull and skin grafting were done to cover the loss of her scalp. Split thickness skin graft was harvested from her thigh and back. Despite the use of warmed *iv* fluids and ventilatory gases, and a reasonably warm operating room compatible with the comfort of the surgical team, her body temperature decreased to 34.5°C during the 10 hr operation with most of her body exposed.

A warming device was ordered for her in the recovery room. The nurse innocently said, “I’ll get the Bair Hugger.” Immediately, the patient’s eyes became wide open, staring at the nurse. We realized that the name struck a cord for the poor woman. The Bair Hugger Patient Warming System (Augustine Medical, Inc.) was effective in raising her temperature. She, however, was not thrilled by the thought of a “bear hugging her” after her ordeal.

David H.W. Wong MB BS FRCPC
Department of Anaesthesia
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC