 MEDIA RELEASE

Beware the male DIY
5 years of Angle Grinder injuries

Friday 12 May, 2017

The dangers of power saws and angle grinders have been raised at the Annual Scientific Congress (ASC) of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) this week in Adelaide. Purpose powered saws have always been an important tool on work sites but their domestic use is rising.

Dr Edward Gibson, a Darwin plastic surgery service registrar, told the surgical conference today that whilst there were numerous safety checks in work places, training and safety devices may be lacking when saws are used around the household.

“Circular saws can cause significant trauma with lasting disability and there are no restrictions on their sales, meaning they are widely available,” Dr Gibson said.

“Anecdotally, our surgical department has witnessed a dramatic increase in trauma from powered saws occurring around the home rather than at work.”

Dr Gibson conducted a retrospective audit of all admissions related to angle grinder or power saws between January 2011 and August 2016. A literature review was also performed.

“There were 94 cases found during the study period. All bar one of the cases involved male patients between the ages of 15 to 75, although 30-50 year olds represented over one third of these cases.

“Two third of cases occurred at home and 43 of the cases involved tendon, nerve or bony injuries.

“Arms and hands were most commonly affected representing 58 cases.”

Dr Gibson concluded that trauma from powered saws was likely to continue to rise due to their ready availability and that it was important to recognise the risks associated with their use.

“The trend towards injuries being sustained at home rather than at work is important to understand so that potential prevention interventions can be better targeted,” he said.

Up to 1500 surgeons are currently meeting at the Adelaide Convention Centre for a week of workshops, discussions, Plenaries and masterclasses across a broad range of surgical issues.

About RACS
RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

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