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NEWS

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas
5323 Harry Hines Boulevard Dallas, Texas 75235 (214)688-3404

CONTACT: Ann Harrell
Office: 214/688-3404
Home: 214/369-2695

*****Baxter writes "Better News About Burns" for new encyclopedia year book.

DALLAS--"Better News About Burns," an up-to-date look at the newest information about the treatment of burn victims today, is one of 14 articles presented in Medical Update 1982, the first World Book Encyclopedia family health publication. Author is Dr. Charles R. Baxter, professor of Surgery at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas and head of the world-famous Parkland Burn Center.

The article acquaints readers with information about what to do until an ambulance arrives for the burn victim, what happens to the burn patient biologically, treatment in the hospital and the rehabilitation phase. It also describes first, second and third degree burns and how to quickly evaluate the seriousness of a burn accident; home treatment of minor burn injuries; statistics on burn injuries in this country; human skin banking; emotional trauma coming from these injuries; care of the scarred skin and cosmetic surgery; advances in burn research around the country and prevention of injuries.

The UT burn specialist leads a team of surgeons and other health personnel that has had a major role in developing burn treatment over a 20-year period. During much of this time a serious burn over half the body was considered a death warrant. New treatment procedures Baxter and his medical team have pioneered include better means of treating burn shock, and new approaches to nutrition of the burned patient who has nutritional needs up to four times larger than the normal person.

Other improvements in treatment, all pioneered at Parkland, include new ways of administering antibiotics, the use of human skin, early surgical removal of burned tissue, as well as the team approach to burn care. Baxter's team at Parkland involves reconstructive surgeons, physical and occupational therapists, psychologists and social workers. However, probably the single biggest factor in burn survival today, says the trauma specialist, is the use of human skin as a protective covering for large wounds.

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Eight years ago the survival of an eight-year-old girl with 92 percent burns made medical history at the Dallas hospital. Baxter attributes her survival to these techniques of treatment by the Burn Center team. Now the skin bank that supplied human skin for her treatment has been incorporated into the UT/Lions Transplant Program for Bankable Organs.

"Because the Dallas Skin Bank was established just two months before this child was burned, hers was the first case of this magnitude to call on its resources," he says. "Up to then we had been able to bring four or five patients to the point of survival, but we couldn't get the vital homograft (human skin), so we lost them."

The skin bank now routinely receives about one-third of the donor gifts in the United States. Last year there were 192 donations and the Dallas skin bank continues to be one of the few facilities in the nation able to supply skin to other centers in emergencies on a regular basis. Still, Baxter says, the amount is vastly inadequate, and the Dallas researchers are pushing studies in improved freezing techniques and investigating more efficient grafting techniques in order to stretch the supply.

As guiding influence for the medical school's outstanding burn team since 1961, Baxter has been able to engineer not only regional logistical operations, including air lift delivery to the center, but national recognition for burn research. The physician still takes a personal interest in the patients who have undergone the shock of a large burn.

Other articles by outstanding leaders in medicine include "Dealing with Diabetes," by Michael Reed; "Aspirin and Your Heart," by Marcia J. Opp; "The Perils of PCP (Angel Dust)," by Milan Korcok; "Arthritis Is Everyone's Disease," by Dr. Frederic C. McDuffie; "Grim News About Gums," by Dr. Paul Goldhaber; "Fending Off Fears," by Charles-Gene McDaniel; "Calling it (Smoking) Quits," by Elizabeth R. Gonzales.

"The Second Opinion (on surgery)," by Drs. Madelon L. Finkel and Eugene G. McCarthy; "Reducing the Risks of Cancer," by Harriet S. Page; "Dr. Beaumont's (19th Century) Research (on digestion)," by Darlene R. Stille; "Hospices," by the editors of MD Magazine; "On Smell," by Dr. Lewis Thomas; "Help for the Headache," by Dr. David R. Codden and a medical-update section.

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