


# SCAPHOID FRACTURES: FIXATION TIMING AND TECHNIQUE

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# Scaphoid: Awkward, but Important

- The scaphoid links the proximal and distal carpal rows
- Acts as a “tie-rod”
- Why is it an “awkward but important little bone”?



# Scaphoid Fractures



- Most commonly fractured carpal bone
  - *1.47 fractures per 100,000 person-years*
  - *2:1 Male : female ratio*
- 11% of all fractures in the hand
- Mechanism usually fall on extended wrist

# Scaphoid Fractures

Herbert

“Stable”

“Unstable”



A1



B1



B3



A2



B2



B4

# Scaphoid Fractures

- Untreated scaphoid fractures lead to nonunions
- Scaphoid Nonunions lead to degenerative changes in the wrist (SNAC)



Dr. Milan Stevanovic  
“big problem”



# Treatment of Scaphoid Fractures: Timing

- Multiple retrospective studies of Scaphoid Nonunions
  - *31-53% of patients had a delay in treatment of 4+weeks*
- Denmark 1988: Delay of 4 weeks 45% chance of Nonunion

# Treatment of Scaphoid Fractures: Timing

- SWIFFT Trial: multicenter, open label, randomized superiority trial
- 439 (408) patients with minimally displaced scaphoid waist fractures(2mm or less) randomized to “aggressive casting” or immediate Fixation, 1 year follow-up
- 1 Non-union in fixation group, 4 in casting group
- need to fix 73 scaphoids to prevent 1 nonunion
- casting 6-12 weeks prior to fixation does not significantly increase nonunion rate.

# Diagnosis of Scaphoid Fractures: Timing

Xrays: 25% false negative rate for non-displaced scaphoid fracture

MRI: near 100% sens and specificity

CT Scan: 72% sens and 100% specificity





# Scaphoid Fractures: Fixation

- Cannulated Headless compression screws
- Can be inserted Dorsal or Volar
- Percutaneous or open approach
- Conical design provides more compression as compared to shank design



# Scaphoid Screw Fixation

Location, Location, Location

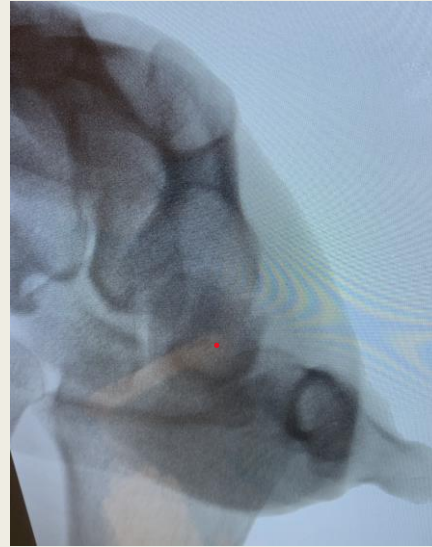
- Centrally placed screws have greater stiffness and load to failure
- Longer screws have less fracture fragment motion



# Scaphoid Screw Fixation: Technique

- Easier to place screw in central axis from Dorsal approach as compared to Volar, no difference *in vivo*
- during percutaneous Volar insertion need to be trans-trapezial 20% of the time for central insertion

# Dorsal Percutaneous Fixation



# Cases:



29 male RHD M Construction worker,  
fell playing soccer



29 male RHD M Construction worker,  
fell playing soccer



s/p ORIF within 1 week of injury

29 male RHD M Construction worker,  
fell playing soccer



s/p ORIF 3 months postop



55y/o RHD M s/p MVA 11/22



Xrays at the time of injury

55y/o RHD M s/p MVA 11/22



Xrays: 15 months after injury

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