

WSU studies head-neck injuries

With a flick of a switch, a head is dropped onto an anvil, slammed with a hockey puck, or slashed with a lacrosse stick.

It sounds like a movie set for a "Rambo" film, but it's actually the Wayne State University Gordian-Lissner biomechanics laboratory. Scientists are studying the prevention and treatment of head and neck injuries.

Head and neck injuries are responsible for more teen-age deaths than any other injury or disease, "and may be the most serious medical problem we have in terms of man years lost to the country because they inordinately involve the young," said Voligt R. Hodgson.

Hodgson is a professor of biomechanics and head of the biomechanics lab in the department of neurosurgery at Wayne State.

The university receives numerous grants each year to study the safety of sports equipment and automobiles.

DURING A Head injury symposium on Wayne's campus, Doty Harnden-Creedon presented a \$1 million endowment — two-thirds of which will go to the WSU neurosurgery department and one-third to the Michigan Head Injury Alliance.

The symposium will feature Judy Ferguson, vice president of the National Head Injury Foundation, and numerous national and international head injury experts. It will commemorate the 45th anniversary of what many feel was the real beginning of head injury research.

According to Hodgson, Dr. E.S. Gordian and engineer H.R. Lissner were among the first in the world to collaborate on head injury research. Together they set up the biomechanics lab at Wayne State, the first of its kind in the country.

More than four decades later, Hodgson noted that the lab has been at least partly responsible for safer cars and especially for safer sports equipment.

"In 1976, we announced to the football community that there was only so much we could do with helmets to prevent head injury and little we could do with helmets to prevent neck injury.

From 1976 to 1983, 11 persons annually became quadriplegics from football injuries, and in 1984, only 5 became quadriplegics, Hodgson said. "Fatal head injuries have been reduced about 65 percent and neck injuries have been at least cut in half."

Oakland County offers master gardener plan

Although winter is returning to Michigan, now is a good time to sharpen your horticultural skills.

A master gardener training program starts in Oakland County on Jan. 27. Sessions will be held on Mondays for 10 weeks and will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Oakland County government complex near Pontiac. Cost is \$40.

Unlike other gardening classes, master gardener is designed for people with at least a moderate level of horticultural experience. But previous formal training is not required.

Master gardener candidates are also expected to volunteer at least 40 hours of time during the upcoming gardening season. Volunteers fulfill an active educational role by staffing plant clinics, telephone hotlines, and by providing gardening talks.

Master gardeners have assisted thousands of people, and the volunteer service is an integral part of being a master gardener.

Those interested should call the Oakland County office of the Michigan State University extension service for application information. The number is 858-8887. Application deadline is Jan. 11, 1986.



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