

and the family are sitting across the busy surgeon's desk. Also, patients, many of whom already feel disenfranchised from much health care decision-making, might believe that this allocation scheme removes yet another piece of what limited humanity remains in the health care system.

In spite of such operational issues, there is a real need for a prioritization tool such as the one described by Taylor and colleagues. In fact, the legal need for such a tool is about to be appraised in Quebec where a patient waiting for cardiac surgery died after his original operation had been

allegedly postponed because of an illegal nursing strike.

References

1. Taylor, MC, Hadorn DC, and the Steering Committee of the Western Canada Waiting List Project. Developing priority criteria for general surgery: results from the Western Canada Waiting List Project. *Can J Surg* 2002;45(5):351-7.
2. Olson D, De Gara C. How long do patients wait for elective general surgery? *Can J Surg* 2002;45(1):31-3.
3. Simunovic M, Gagliardi A, McCready D, Coates A, Levine M, DePetrillo D. A snapshot of waiting times for cancer surgery provided by surgeons affiliated with regional cancer centres in Ontario. *CMAJ* 2001;165(4):421-5.
4. Sampalis J, Boukas S, Liberman M, Reid T, Dupuis G. Impact of waiting time on the quality of life of patients awaiting coronary artery bypass grafting. *CMAJ* 2001;165:429-33.
5. Cheng SJ, Freeman RB Jr, Wong JB. Predicting the probability of progression-free survival in patients with small hepatocellular carcinoma. *Liver Transpl* 2002;8(4):323-8.
6. Salerno F, Merli M, Cazzaniga M, Valeriano V, Rossi P, Lovaria A, et al. MELD score is better than Child-Pugh score in predicting 3-month survival of patients undergoing transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt. *J Hepatol* 2002;36(4):494-500.

Calendar Calendrier

Interactive surgery symposium

The Mayo Clinic Interactive Surgery Symposium will be held from Feb. 2 to 5, 2003, at the Marriott's Camelback Inn Resort, Golf Club & Spa, 5402 East Lincoln Dr., Scottsdale AZ 85253. Sponsored by the Mayo Clinic, this update for surgeons will be directed by Drs. James Swain and John Donohue. Credits: 18 Category 1. For further information contact Courtney J. Clement, Mayo School of CME, Mayo Clinic, 13400 East Shea Blvd., Scottsdale AZ 85259; tel 480 301-4580; fax 480 301-8323

Gastroenterology meeting

From Feb. 24 to 28, 2003, the Mayo Clinic will hold its winter gastroenterology meeting at the Scottsdale Marriott at McDowell Mountains, 16770 North Perimeter Dr., Scottsdale AZ 85260. The course director will be Dr. David E. Fleischer. Some of the areas to be covered include new therapies for gastrointestinal reflux disease; inflammatory

bowel disease; irritable bowel syndrome; hepatitis; cardiac causes of chest pain; cancer genetics for practising physicians; novel colon cancer screening; video capsule endoscopy; obesity; and cholestatic liver disease. For further information contact Courtney J. Clement, Mayo School of CME, Mayo Clinic, 13400 East Shea Blvd., Scottsdale AZ 85259; tel 480 301-4580; fax 480 301-8323

Liver diseases and transplantation

The Mayo Clinic will sponsor a course entitled "Update in Liver Diseases and Transplantation" on Mar. 28 and 29, 2003 at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 4415 East Paradise Valley Pkwy S, Paradise Valley AZ. The course director will be Dr. David D. Douglas. The course will focus in depth on topics concerning hepatology and liver transplantation for the general practitioner, gastroenterologist and physicians with a special interest in liver disease and transplantation. For further information contact

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Upper extremity update

The 19th annual upper extremity update symposium will be held on Friday, Apr. 4, 2003, at Mount Sinai Hospital, 600 University Ave., Toronto, Ont. The symposium is directed to practising orthopedic surgeons, plastic surgeons, general surgeons, physical therapists, occupational therapists and nurses with an interest in musculoskeletal disorders, and trainees in these fields. Credit: Maintenance of Certification Program, RCPSC, and Category 1, AMA Physician's Recognition Award. Contact: Continuing Education, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, Ste. 650, 500 University Ave., Toronto ON M5G 1V7; tel. 416 978-2719/1 888 512-8173; fax 416 971-2200; email ce.med@utoronto.ca; Web site www.cme.utoronto.ca ■