

## Evidence-based dental traumatology

### EDITORIAL

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Randomized controlled trials are the golden standard for evidence-based treatment. Such studies are needed and should ideally be part of the evidence necessary for decision on treatment. But how much evidence is needed to apply research in clinical practice? An overemphasis on randomized controlled trials poses important ethical problems. Trauma victims can seldom be subjected to randomization. The majority of treatment carried out today in dental traumatology is therefore based on observational studies of trauma patients and experimental studies carried out in animals.

In 2003, Smith and Pell published an entertaining classic article titled 'Parachute use to prevent death and major trauma due to gravitational challenge' (1). They used the lack of randomized controlled trials in testing parachutes to show that situations actually still exist where such trials are unnecessary. The basis for

parachute use is purely observational. We must therefore never forget that the parachute approach, where recommendations are given based on good science but without randomized trials, is often more suitable in some situations.

I recommend everyone interested in research to read this article.

**Lars Andersson**

Editor-in-Chief

e-mail: lars.andersson@hsc.edu.kw

#### Reference

1. Smith GCS, Pell JP. Parachute use to prevent death and major trauma related to gravitational challenge: systematic review of randomised controlled trials. *BMJ* 2003;327:1459–61.

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