EMERGENCY CASEBOOK

Motorbike toe: a toddler’s sporting injury

Children as young as two years of age are not infrequently given the opportunity to ride on specially designed and built miniature motorcycles. These have an engine capacity of 50 cc and a saddle height of 48 cm. The children often wear inadequate protective clothing, especially footwear, and are of necessity too young to understand the inherent dangers of riding motorised vehicles. They may very easily drag their feet along the ground, causing a sudden forced plantar flexion. In so doing they are susceptible to transverse fracture of the proximal phalanx of the great toe (fig 1). The clinical picture is,

![Figure 1](transverse fracture of the proximal phalanx of the great toe)

as expected, a distressed child who refuses to weight bear. The affected foot is bruised and tender, with maximum tenderness over the great toe and first metatarsal. The fracture may or may not be displaced.

Conservative treatment with analgesia and application of a toe spica is adequate, and the long term outlook is expected to be very favourable.

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