In Reply:

The aim of this cadaver study was not to describe a solution for the majority of “transverse” waist fractures. According to the literature, these may be the most common fractures, but the tools used for the classification in the past are inaccurate compared with the tools we are using today.\(^1\)\(^-\)\(^3\) Analysis of fractures with radiographs without a clear definition of the long axis of the scaphoid questions the use of the word “transverse.”\(^4\) The short oblique simulation of a fracture may not be as rare as suggested. These may be the fractures that more readily displace and that truly need stable fixation.

Nevertheless, the real purpose of this study was to examine the concept of a screw perpendicular to the scaphoid fracture. For this reason, we needed an unstable fracture. It was a great chance to perform the fixation without passing through the scaphotrapezial joint, which would make the percutaneous technique easier. If this unstable fracture may be fixed perpendicular to the fracture, any fracture can.

Letter Regarding “Effects of Tension Across the Tendon Repair Site on Tendon Gap and Ultimate Strength”

To the Editor:

We read with interest the study by Drs. Wu and Tang on the effects of tension across the tendon repair site on gapping and ultimate strength.\(^1\) The authors used a 4-strand cross-lock repair performed with a 2-strand suture in their study and refer to it as a new technique.

We point out that the technique is not new. We have described the same repair in an earlier article in which the repair was named the “single cross-stitch locked repair with double-stranded suture.”\(^2\) This repair used a cross-stitch locked repair similar to Sandow and MacMahon’s repair. We agree with the authors that this repair is easy to perform.
In Reply:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the letter. I appreciate the query about the investigation published in May.1 This letter also inspired me to provide more discussion about the proper use of the word “new” in scientific papers. We may need to review the definition of “new.” In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “new” is primarily defined as “having recently come into existence,” “having been seen, used, or known for a short time being,” and “other than the former or old.” “New” thus implies that something is “not of long duration.” By definition, “new” is not equivalent to “used for the first time” or “not existing previously.” Thus, a new method refers to a method used or known recently. In the article that we published, we referred to the 4-strand cross-lock method as a new technique, which is proper, despite descriptions about this method shortly before our present report.

In a journal article, authors should avoid claiming priority in development of a new technique, because this does not add to the applicability of the technique, and such claims are sometimes inaccurate. We should be careful in using “… reported for the first time in the literature.” However, there is much greater freedom in using “new” to indicate a recently developed or recently reported method. This usage carries a much broader meaning than “previously not reported.” In many publications, a great number of authors use “new” to indicate a method that is actually not new and has already been used for years, to contrast it with an older method.

Different from referring to a technique, in speaking of the discovery of a natural phenomenon or a natural law, “a new discovery” invariably indicates a finding not described previously. The cross-lock method has been reported in the recent literature.2-4 One year ago, our group described this method in a book chapter2 and reported its mechanical data in a journal article.3 Both sources were published before the 2012 article4 that was referred to. Despite the description of this method in these publications, it is appropriate to refer to this method as a “new” technique, because this technique has been known for a short period of time.

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REFERENCES