

Portable monitor developed to aid tooth grinders

United Press International

A Portable muscle activity monitor developed at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio helps in the diagnosis of pains suffered by an estimated 10 million of the nation's tooth grinders.

The tooth clenching, much of it attributed to stress, goes on during sleep, behind the wheel on crowded highways, or, in the case of highly competitive students, while studying for exams.

"Some patients are merely annoyed by a slight problem but for others, a TMJ disorder is a serious disease that can interfere with vital functions such as eating and speaking," said Dr. M. Franklin Dolwick, an associate professor of oral and maxillofacial surgery who uses the monitor to diagnose patients.

A report on the monitor in a publication of the health science center says it resembles a handheld calculator sprouting three tiny wires with electrodes at the ends.

These electrodes are attached to the tooth grinder's upper jaw muscles.

clenching is suspected, patients attach the electrodes during the day.

For daytime use, the monitor can be kept on a desk or in a pocket. At the press of a button, a display panel shows a reading of muscle contraction.

For five years, Dolwick's TMJ studies also have utilized arthrography, a technique of seeing the interior of a joint and allowing doctors to detect cases in which the disk inside the joint is out of place.

"Prior to this, if a regular X-ray showed that the joint was normal, the problem was thought to be a functional or muscle disorder," Dolwick said.

"There were always about 20 percent of the patients who didn't respond to treatments and we thought that they must have severe psychological problems.

"Now we know that many of them have disk problems (the TMJ disk). For a small percentage of those, we have developed a surgical technique to reposition the disk if necessary," Dolwick said.

Other treatments for TMJ problems include medication, relaxation therapy and adjusting the teeth.

"In the past, TMJ disorders were approached as a single disease that had a single solution, but we now know that there are various problems with sometimes very different treatments," Dolwick said.

The TMJ joint is unique, compared to other body joints. It is a sliding hinged affair containing a disk and socket. It can move in all directions.

TMJ troubles show up as pain and soreness over the jaws in front of the ear, pain when moving the jaw as in chewing, jaw joint noise such as clicking or grating, and difficult opening or closing the jaw.

Emergency shelters combat hot weather

United Press International

Schools closed early, emergency shelters were opened and a Kansas utility gave fans to poor people sweating out a late August heat wave Wednesday that pushed hot desert air into the Plains and sent the mercury shooting toward 100 from Illinois to Texas.

Even before midday, hot air from the desert Southwest pushed north. It was 100 at Emporia, Kan.; 99 at Columbia, Mo.; 98 at Enid, Okla.; 96 at Wichita Falls, Texas; 95 at Dodge City, Kan., and Kansas City, Mo., and 90 at Moline, Ill.

In Illinois, dozens of temperature records were broken Wednesday, causing schools to close early and the opening of emergency shelters. A Kansas utility gave fans to poor people sweating out the late August heat wave that sent the mercury shooting toward 100 from Illinois to Texas.

St. Louis had a record 107, breaking the old record of 99, set in 1954 and other 100-plus readings were reported in downtown Kansas City and Columbia, Mo., as well as 110 at Wichita, Kan.

Schools in Peoria and East St. Louis announced they would dismiss classes early. Schools in Wichita, Kan., opened and closed about an hour early to avoid the afternoon heat.

Air quality was expected to reach

unhealthly levels for the second day in a row in Madison and St. Clair counties in southwestern Illinois.

"If people have existing heart or respiratory problems or feel they may be susceptible of having respiratory-type ailments they should try to restrict their physical activities today," Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality Manager Terry Switzer said.

Three air-conditioned shelters and the municipal auditorium were opened in Topeka, Kan., where it was a record 106 Tuesday.

Firefighters hoped to the advantage of a break in the weather to begin containing fires that have scorched 150,000 acres of timber and grassland in Montana, and fire crews in Oregon worked on the remains of a forest fire at Wampus Butte.

"Weather conditions are in the 90s, but there are light winds and we're in pretty good shape," said Greg McLaren, a U.S. Forest Service spokesman. "There have been no injuries."

Residents of Homer, Ill., cleaned up after a tornado that damaged 30 houses Tuesday night.

"There's pretty extensive damage in the center of town over an 8-to-10 block area," Fire Chief Don Glenn said.

Last week, the first report by the Commission investigating the Feb. 15, 1982 sinking of the Ocean Ranger oil rig said there had been a confusion on the rig over whether the marine captain or the rig's tool-pusher, in charge of all mechanical drilling operations, had ultimate authority. The disaster off the coast of Newfoundland claimed 82 lives.

Harrison told about 250 engineers and other offshore industry personnel that one person alone with each drilling project should be responsible for all the craft's safety provisions "in return for unambiguous accountability for safety." That person should come from the companies involved, he said, logically, "the licensee-operator who would be accountable for the unsafe consequences of the entire operation."

"Either he would state with certainty that the vessel had adequate escape and survival systems if the vessel needed to be evacuated, or he would call a spade a spade — and point out that evacuation and survival systems specified by government code and regulations were useless in sea conditions, common to the east coast of Canada. Obviously with today's state of the art, he would make the second choice," Harrison said.

Offshore drilling rig safety systems studied

United Press International

ST. JOHN'S, Newfoundland — A Canadian engineer who pioneered offshore drilling urged an international safety conference early this week to give clear authority to one person on each ocean rig to oversee evacuation and survival systems.

Gordon Harrison, former president of Dome Petroleum's subsidiary, Canadian Marine Drilling, also had the start of the three-day session sponsored by the Royal Commission on the Ocean Ranger disaster that current government codes and regulations on safety, evacuation and survival procedures were "useless" in the sea conditions found off Canada's east coast.

Harrison, who in 1968 designed the first offshore drilling platform based near Nova Scotia's Sable Island, said industry, not government, should be responsible for improving safety standards and procedures.

"Once clearly given the job to create a safe future for drilling on the east coast of Canada, the industry will respond with unrelenting purpose. Necessity is the mother of invention," said Harrison, who now runs a Houston-based company involved in off-shore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.

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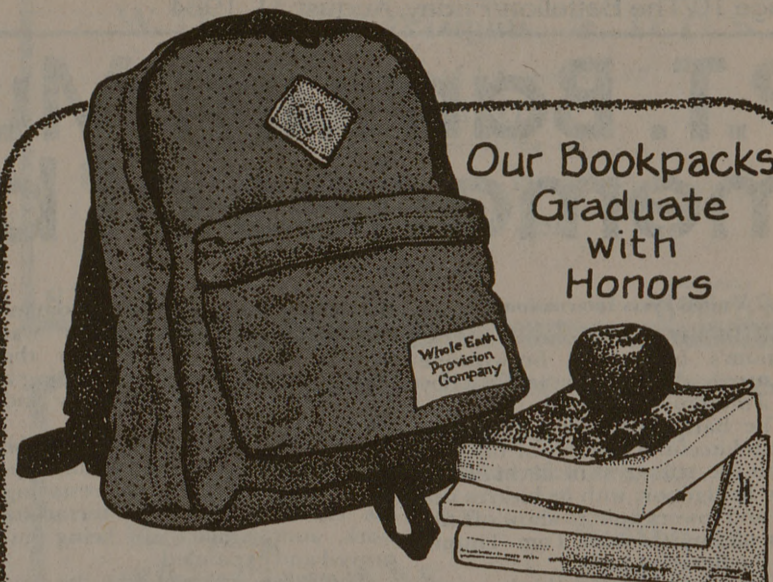
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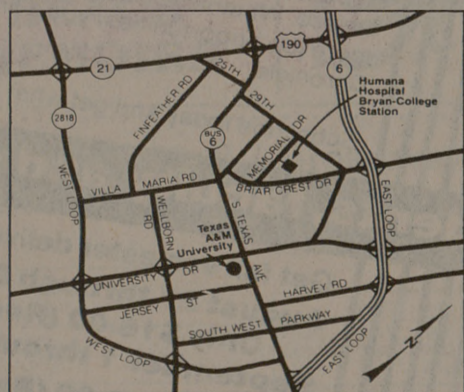
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