



Issue: Ring Cutters

Raised by: Central Australian RAN's

Background: There have been instances in remote clinics, as in any emergency department, where the ring on a client's finger has to be removed from an oedematous or traumatised finger, to prevent loss of the digit.

Discussion: There is no debate about the importance of a ring cutter when faced with a relevant scenario. The debate is more related to risk assessment to determine if the expense of purchase is justified.

It is understood that rings, as items of jewellery, at present are not frequently used amongst the majority of the indigenous population that Remote Health Branch serves. There are some communities where tourists and other non-indigenous clients are seen more frequently, many of whom do wear this type of jewellery.

It was agreed to survey the opinion of health centre staff on the importance of ring cutters, and see how many ring cutters were already held by health centres. Most respondents to the survey have not required the use of a ring-cutter, but the general consensus was that when you need it, you need it!

In some instances staff have utilised some creativity to secure the removal, such as string/nylon cord, side-cutters and other devices that worked but were not really the most suitable.

In one location, evacuation from the community has been required to remove a ring.

Consultation: Survey to all DHCS Remote Health Centres – 24 respondents

(All survey responses were appreciated- thank you for the time given.)

References: CRANA Clinical Procedures Manual

Outcome: Best Practice Group agrees with the respondent's consensus that ring-cutters are a useful piece of equipment. There are some communities that already have ring cutters. In most places the instrument would be a very low use item, however in locations where the HCM deems it important to have this instrument earlier due to higher risk, they are required to submit an Internal Requisition with their business case, to their line manager.

Staff are also reminded to be familiar with the ring removal technique described in the CRANA Clinical Procedures Manual (Page 237) which can be extremely effective.

Occasionally, extra funds are made available to Remote Health Branch (slippage funds, specific grants). Ring-Cutters will be placed on a *wish list* to be purchased for all those clinics without them, as funding becomes available.