

Burn Victim: Story of a Survivor

To the Editor:

Burn injury is one of the most catastrophic injuries that the human body can sustain and still survive. Burn injuries are extremely costly to individuals, communities, and employers. Severe burns in children can result in prolonged suffering, disfigurement, and impaired physical and mental development. The goals of burn rehabilitation include helping the patient return to the highest level of function and independence possible while improving the overall quality of life, physically, emotionally, and socially. Children in Ukraine with severe and debilitating burn injuries often do not receive needed medical treatment because of limited resources in Ukrainian hospitals and/or the cost of treatment.

Doctors Collaborating to Help Children is a non-profit organization that works to improve the care of burn-injured children in Ukraine. In the past 5 years, we have been able to bring 14 children from different regions of Ukraine to Shriners Hospital in Boston for treatment.

Alex S. is one of the burn victims who is thriving as a result of his care. He had an accident 7 years ago when he went fishing in Ukraine. His fishing rod touched a power line, and he was hit with 10,000 V of electric shock. He was holding a fishing rod with his right hand, which was touching his right shoulder. Alex had a high voltage electrical burn injury third and fourth degrees, 25% TBSA involving his right upper and lower extremities, head, and trunk. His right forearm had to be amputated. He spent 2 months in the intensive care unit in critical condition. Alex went through prolonged treatment and prosthetic rehabilitation of his right arm at Shriners Hospital for burned children in Boston. He had more than 20 surgical procedures and is now able to resume normal life.

Currently, Alex is a high school junior in Massachusetts. His interests include rowing, martial arts, web

design, and painting. Alex started to paint with his non-dominant left hand and has received a lifetime scholarship to the Museum of Fine Arts (Figures 1 and 2). He maintains and designs the Web site for Doctors Collaborating to Help Children (www.dctohc.org).

*Gennadiy Fuzaylov, MD
Department of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine
Boston, Massachusetts.*

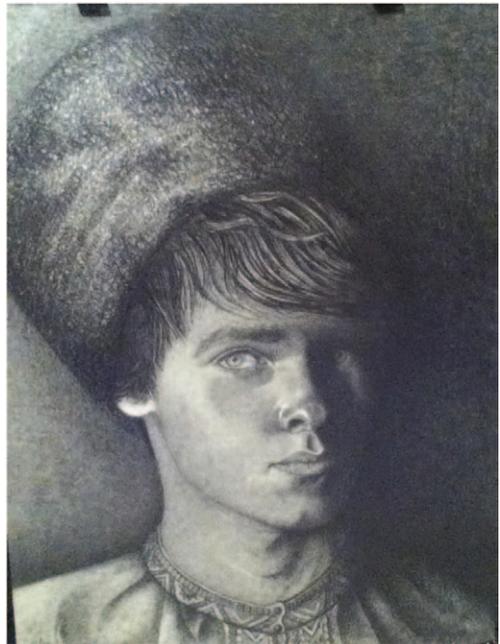


Figure 1. Self-portrait in a national Ukrainian dress (pencil drawing).



Figure 2. Mills in rural Ukraine (oil painting).

Address correspondence to Gennadiy Fuzaylov, MD, Harvard Medical School, Massachusetts General Hospital, Shriners Hospital for Burn Children, Boston, and Department of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine, 55 Fruit Street, Gray/Jackson 409, Boston, Massachusetts 02114.

The author declares no conflict of interest.

*Copyright © 2012 by the American Burn Association.
1559-047X/2012*

DOI: 10.1097/BCR.0b013e3182642b5c