

## SETTING

Suburban Private Practice

## PATIENT

You are an active person who plays squash regularly. Yesterday evening, you played squash in a new pair of shoes. During the game the big toe of your right foot became increasingly painful. When you removed your shoes at the end of the game, you observed that the toenail was purple. Pain from the toe continued throughout the night, so you made an appointment to see a podiatrist this morning. (You have not brought the shoes with you.)

## TASK

- Find out why the nail is so painful and discoloured.
- Ask the podiatrist how you can get relief from the pain in your toe. (You are worried about piercing the nail – pain and possible infection?)
- When asked, request for advice on how to prevent this happening again.
- Resist the podiatrist's suggestion that you discard your new, expensive squash shoes, which are highly recommended for comfort and foot support.

## SETTING

Suburban Private Practice

## PODIATRIST

This active person plays squash regularly and has sought treatment for a painful right big toe. He/she played squash last night in new shoes. The description of events and the appearance of the toenail indicate a subungual haematoma (pooling of blood underneath the toenail, of traumatic origin).

## TASK

- Explain your diagnosis and the treatment (making a small hole in the nail plate to release the blood trapped underneath).
- Reassure the patient that the procedure is painless, will immediately relieve the pain and will reduce the discolouration. Prompt treatment will minimise the risk of losing the toenail.
- Find out what further information the patient needs. Explain the cause of the condition: the new squash shoes are unsuitable (too small, too narrow at the top, or inadequately fastened). Repeated jamming of the top of the toe during the squash game has caused bleeding underneath the nail.
- Recommend that the patient discards the shoes (danger of permanent damage).