

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude is due Professor Matti Sulamaa who primarily guided me into the present subject. I thank Professor Sulamaa for the stimulating interest and advice which I have been privileged to receive throughout the past years.

I thank Professor Pentti Rokkanen, the former Professor of Surgery in the University of Tampere and the present Head of the Clinic for Orthopaedics and Traumatology in the University of Helsinki, for the supervision of my study and for his great experience which was freely put in my hands for the entire work.

I also wish to thank Professor Ville Autio, Head of the Surgical Clinic, the University Central Hospital of Tampere, for his benevolent attitude and the encouragement I have received.

I express my warm thanks to Professor Panu Vilkki, Docent Arpo Aromaa and Docent Eero Mäkinen for their constructive criticism.

My gratitude is due to Docent Matti Kataja for the ADP and statistical consultation he has given whenever needed.

I thank Dr Pekka Arajärvi for helping me in the construction of the radiological follow-up program of this study and Docent Veijo Vahvanen for his useful comments.

I owe special thanks to Maija Pohjakallio, M.Sc. for collecting the literature and for guidance in other aspects of the library.

Dr Anna Luttamus and Mr John C Perrin, M.A. have given their assistance in linguistic considerations and Mr Robert Mc Gilleon, M.A. has done the final proof correction of the manuscript. I am sincerely grateful for this.

My warmest thanks are due to the staffs of the Department of Diagnostic Radiology and the Department of Pediatric Surgery, the University Central Hospital of Tampere, for their support.

This study has been financially aided by the Scientific Fund of the City of Tampere, the Department of Clinical Sciences, the University of Tampere and the Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica.