



DERMATOLOGICAL SURGERY

“LARGE SUCTION BLISTER SKIN GRAFTS FOR VITILIGO SURGERY USING ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE SUCTION CUPS : A SIMPLE, INEXPENSIVE AND HIGH YIELD INNOVATION.”

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BACKGROUND: Suction blister split skin tissue grafting (SBG) is a useful technique in vitiligo surgery with good aesthetic results. However, conventional method (using syringes and 3-way cannulas) has limitations viz. useful for small lesions only, cumbersome method, poor yield. Epidermal cell suspension (ECS) methods are helpful in larger lesions however they are expensive and require many reagents and equipments. ‘Suction cup with a vacuum pump’ is an inexpensive device easily available and used by practitioners of alternative medicines eg. Massage therapy. Use of suction cups can give bigger grafts covering large lesions.

OBSERVATIONS: Suction cups come in variable sizes and are made up of transparent plastic material. They can be disinfected using 2% Glutaldehyde solution before usage. Ten patients of stable vitiligo who fit the criteria for vitiligo surgery were recruited for SBG technique using suction cups. In all patients large grafts were obtained successfully. Many other advantages were also observed: ease in vacuum pressure application requiring only one person with minimal learning curve; liberty to increase the suction pressure if found inadequate during surgery; less chance of device slippage; reusability of cups. Post surgery graft acceptance, appearance and re-pigmentation, were similar to that of conventional method outcome (As per experience of authors in previous patients). None of the ten patients had any major immediate or late complications at donor or recipient sites. One patient showed round pigmentation at donor sites.

KEY MESSAGE: SBG using suction cups is a safe and effective method of split skin tissue grafting for stable vitiligo covering larger areas. This inexpensive innovation may increase the acceptance for SBG technique among users who find conventional method cumbersome and less yielding while ECS methods unaffordable.

