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## Comparison of survival of FU grafts trimmed chubby, medium, and skeletonized

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### Introduction

This study was designed to help explore whether there was a difference in FU graft survival when grafts were trimmed “chubby,” “medium”, or “skinny” (skeletonized). The trend in hair transplantation has been toward increasingly skinny grafts with very little tissue left around the follicles and bulbs so that “dense packing” can be more easily achieved. The Internet and the general hair transplantation marketplace have driven these trends, such that the average practitioner feels that if he is not able to place 50 FUs per cm<sup>2</sup>, then he isn't up-to-date and providing first-rate services.

As background to this study, both Dr. David Seager and this author published almost identical studies in 1997 and 1998 in which the growth of “chubby” FU grafts versus “skinny” grafts was compared.<sup>1,2</sup> Dr. Seager stated in his article that he trimmed the dermal papillae extremely close, whereas I left a generous amount of fat beneath the dermal papillae in both types of grafts. Dr. Seager achieved 89% survival in the “skinny” grafts at 6 months and 113% survival in the “chubby.” Dr. Beehner, also at the 6-month time point, achieved 103% survival in the “skinny” grafts and 133% survival in the “chubby.” It was felt that there were possibly hidden telogen stage follicles in the perifollicular tissue of the “chubby” grafts. Much research (e.g., Kim, et al.) has confirmed that both the bulb of the follicle and the “bulge” area in the upper portion of the follicular structure are important in the germinal growth of a new hair and that there is probably some type of “communication” that occurs between them on a biochemical level.<sup>3</sup>

### Study Setup

The patient was a 60-year-old male with a “shiny bald” advanced Norwood VI level of alopecia. He was in good health and was not on minoxidil or finasteride. From left to right in the rear midscalp region, 5 1cm x 1cm boxes were demarcated with light brown tattoo dots at the corners and a 2mm-wide “moat” of bald skin around each box. Slits in the “parallel” orientation were used to make the recipient sites. Our most experienced technician planted all the grafts in the study. From the time of donor harvest until placement, the grafts were stored in iced Petri dishes in Plasmalyte solution. The five boxes were transplanted in the following manner:

- Box 1: (*far left*) 55 “skeletonized” 2-hair FUs placed in 0.8mm slits
- Box 2: 55 “medium” trimmed 2-hair FUs placed in 0.8mm slits
- Box 3: (*center*) 50 “chubby” 2-hair FUs placed in 0.9 mm slits
- Box 4: 50 “medium” trimmed 1-hair FUs placed in 0.7mm slits
- Box 5: (*far right*) 50 “skeletonized” 1-hair FUs placed in 0.7mm slits

### Results

The patient had two hair counts performed, one at 14 months and the other at 19 months. The results were as follows:

Graft Type	14 Month Survival	19 Month Survival
Box 1: “Skeletonized” 2-hair FUs	62/110 (56.4%)	75/110 (68.7%)
Box 2: “Medium” 2-hair FUs	83/110 (75.5%)	88/110 (80%)
Box 3: “Chubby” 2-hair FUs	72/100 (72%)	88/100 (88%)
Box 4: “Medium” 1-hair FUs	33/50 (66%)	49.50 (98%)
Box 5: “Skeletonized” 1-hair FUs	23/50 (46%)	24/50 (48%)

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**Deadline:  
February 15, 2010**