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## Experience Montréal



**ISHRS 16th Annual Scientific Meeting**

September 3-7, 2008 • Montréal, Québec, Canada

## Why Comparing Techniques in Hair Restoration Surgery Is an Intrinsically Difficult Task

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A number of factors make it intrinsically difficult to *objectively compare* different techniques in the field of hair restoration surgery. I believe an awareness of these factors is important and may help both physicians and patients be more open minded when attempting to evaluate and compare various techniques.

### Long Learning Curve

It may take up to one year to see the final result of a single hair transplant procedure. When multiple procedures are needed, as is often the case, it may take even longer to see the true final result of a specific technique. This is unlike other cosmetic surgery procedures where results are seen in a matter of weeks. This leads to a longer learning curve because a greater length of time is needed to see a sufficient number of results and to make the required adjustments in technique.

### Limited Patient Follow-Up

It is difficult to have every patient return for follow-up. We don't know how many of our patients with less than optimum results simply don't return. I send a one-year follow-up evaluation to all my patients asking for their opinion on the naturalness and density produced with the procedure. In addition, I encourage all patients to come back for a follow-up. However, even with this effort, a large number of patients simply don't return and are lost to follow-up. From my observation, many practices have the same problem. This limited follow-up adds to the difficulty in objectively evaluating our results, especially when added to the long learning curve.

**When inquiring about patient satisfaction with results, we need to remember that the same exact results and look produced in two different patients may lead to totally different levels of satisfaction.**

### Wide Variety of Patients and Hair Characteristics

We see a wide variety of patients at different ages and with different patterns and degrees of baldness. In addition, patients possess different combinations of hair characteristics (color, curl, and caliber). All these variables impact results, and this creates a rich multi-factorial environment that is difficult to objectively evaluate. Two patients may undergo identical procedures with the exact same number of grafts but look totally different after the grafts grow due to differences in their hair characteristics. This variability in characteristics has to be factored in when evaluating the results of different procedures.

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