



# forum

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## Follicular Unit Graft Yield Using Three Different Techniques (An Argument for the Strict Definition of Follicular Unit Transplantation)

Robert M. Bernstein, MD, and William R. Rassman, MD New York, New York

**I**n a collaborative effort in 1998, 21 hair restoration surgeons in the ISHRS attempted to “Standardize the Classification and Description of Follicular Unit Transplantation and Mini-Micrografting Techniques.”<sup>1</sup> It has been the opinion of many physicians who perform Follicular Unit Transplantation (FUT) exclusively in their practices that strict definitions of FUT are essential, both to compare different techniques and to enable physicians to clearly communicate with their patients and with each other. However, some feel that strict definitions of FUT are unnecessary, especially with respect to the requirements for single-strip harvesting and stereo-microscopic dissection.

In order to test the validity of the argument that the techniques of single-strip harvesting and stereo-microscopic dissection are essential aspects of FUT, a retrospective study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of obtaining follicular units using different methods of harvesting and dissection in patients undergoing their first hair transplantation procedure.

### The Three Techniques Studied

#### Mini-Micrografting Technique

The first technique is the one most similar to that used by mini-micrografters, namely harvesting with a multi-bladed knife (blades set 3mm apart), division into smaller sections (of approximately 1cm), and followed by subsequent dissection with loop magnification (1.5x) (Figure 1). The major difference between this technique and traditional

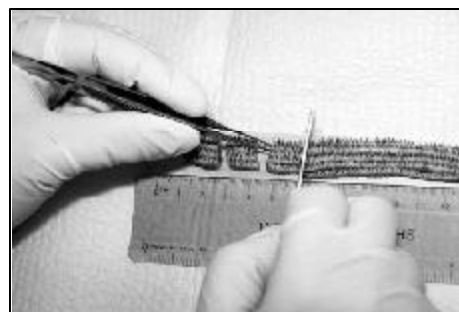


Figure 1. Mini-Micrografting Technique. Harvesting with a multi-bladed knife (blades set 3mm apart), division into smaller sections of approx 1cm (this step shown in figure), and subsequent dissection with loop magnification (1.5x).

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# President's Message



Marcelo Gandelman, MD  
Sao Paulo, Brazil

## In the Corridors of the Hawaii Meeting

I always thought that the best part of the Meetings happens in the corridors. It is there that the presented papers are judged, the Program Chairman is evaluated, and doubts are elucidated. Rubbing shoulders in the corridors promotes new knowledge, friendships, and alliances. In my medical life, I have already experienced several Meeting corridors, though never one as long and beautiful as the one at Waikaloa Village Hotel: Eight minutes in good step to go from the Convention Center to our rooms in a charming lane by foot or by boat, flanked by flowers or incredible works of art.

I have never heard in the corridors of a Meeting such unanimous opinions and so many compliments on scientific merit, organization, and meeting location. Now I will report to you, my dear friends who could not attend, confirmed by those who were present, the comments that I caught in those corridors as well as some of my own observations:

- The discreet, firm, and efficient presidency exercised by Danny Rousso and Nancy's charm.
- "Paul Rose's chairing of the Meeting Committee was perfect."
- "The Incredible Beginner's Program manual, organized by John Cole, was so well-liked that ISHRS is thinking about marketing it."
- "Bill Parsley's training material for the Hands-On Workshop was superior to the mannequins used in the ACLS classes."
- Whispers in the corridors about the Scientific and Education Committee successfully chaired by Jim Arnold: The entire group applauded the nomination of Russell Knudsen and Carlos Uebel for the Follicle Awards.
- Everyone also applauded our cherished Shelly Kabaker when he received Manfred Lucas's wonderful sculpture.
- Everybody missed O'Tar Norwood and looks forward to seeing him in Puerto Vallarta.
- In the corridors of the previous Meetings I attended, my friends regularly blamed the audiovisual team for any failures in their presentations. For the first time, like a miracle, nobody complained. Only compliments were heard. I caught people saying that they even instructed the sessions' Moderators and people that just began trying out Power Point presentations.
- Some affected by jet lag didn't get to sleep at night and wandered through the corridors. They told me that the staff girls were most affected by jet lag: Victoria, Leah, Robin, and Mary Ann walked here and there, day and night, in their incessant and perfect work.
- The sensuality of the Hula dancers, gorgeous Knudsen and Marzola at the Dinner Dance, got spicy comments. Revealing pictures of their performance are

going around on the Internet and their fans are begging Dow to publish their photos in the *Forum*.

- Joe Greco, surrounded every time by lovely Assistants, got more tips and pearls with them than in the Main Session.
- By the border of the huge swimming pool, several friends commented on how many new customers came to them through the ISHRS Website and they clinked glasses to Tony Mangubat.
- The waiters informed me that reservations to the restaurants of the hotel dropped when our elegant treasurer Bob Haber said that our Society is the one that spends more on food for the participants. All started dieting and just feasting on salads.

I am sure that Marc Avram will maintain the quality that characterized our Hawaii Meeting so that in Puerto Vallarta we will continue to be proud of our Society.

I will be in the corridors rubbing shoulders and listening. ♦

*Marcelo Gandelman, MD*

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The ISHRS Golden Follicle Award sculpture, as seen on the cover of this issue, was designed by Francisco Abril, MD. Dr. Abril offers for sale, copies of a small bronze hair follicle sculpture (10" high). For more information, please contact: Clinica Dr. Francisco Abril, PO dela Habana, 137, 28036 Madrid, Spain. Phone: 34-1-359-1961; Fax: 34-1-359-4731.

# Editors' Message

The Editors of the *Forum* extend holiday greetings to the entire Society. We are especially grateful to all of those who worked so hard to make the Hawaii Meeting successful. In case you've already been flipping through the pages for embarrassing photographs of the Saturday Night Gala, there are none. The March/April issue will be dedicated to the highlights of the Hawaii Meeting, both educational and social. If you have comments or photographs dealing with the Hawaii Meeting, please send them to the Editors as soon as possible.

## The Dissector Column

At the business meeting in Hawaii, the membership voted to keep the anonymous authorship of The Dissector column. The vote was fairly close, so it's safe to say this is an issue in which the Society is almost evenly divided. The Editors will use a great deal of discretion in selecting the material that is used in The Dissector column. The Board of Governors will be considering any future guidelines at its first meeting this year. In the future, we would also encourage, but not stipulate, author identity of this column. Readers are directed to a "Letter to the Editor" that appears in this issue, written by Dr. Carlos Puig. As always, written opinions are greatly appreciated.

## The Future of the Forum Newsletter

Considering the content of the *Forum*, we have participated in a



Russell Knudsen, MBBS  
Sydney, Australia



Dow B. Stough, MD  
Hot Springs, Arkansas

number of e-mail exchanges, and formal and informal discussions concerning the direction and content of this newsletter. Our esteemed colleague and close friend, Dr. Jim Arnold, makes the following point, "Personal feelings on the present role, and the future role of the *Forum*, varies quite a bit from one member to the next. Opinions of the *Forum*'s validity range from a 'chatty newsletter' to a 'quotable scientific journal.' Most members of the ISHRS, the Editors included, are debating the exact role the future of the *Forum* should play. A mission statement by the *Forum* would clarify the role and the intent of our publication." The Editors both agree with the need for a mission statement, but will look toward the membership and the Board of Governors for guidance in developing this mission statement.

## Why a Mission Statement?

Dr. Arnold also notes that a mission statement by the *Forum*

would be helpful, especially in keeping fact and fiction in perspective. A mission statement could allow something such as the anonymous Dissector column to simply be, without having to go back and defend it after the fact. The *Forum* could express controversial opinions without the need for an apology or defense. Also, proper wording would take the wind out of the sails of any outsider, like the lay press, trial lawyers, or a consumer group attempting to use *Forum* material to our detriment and their own material gain. Dr. O'Tar Norwood has stated on many occasions that the *Forum* was conceptualized to speed the sharing of information between hair transplant surgeons. Dialog between surgeons around the world was a goal, and thus, the official name—*Hair Transplant Forum International*—evolved. However, many changes have taken place since the initial inception of the *Forum*. Because of the variety of subjects now presented in a single issue, one could find something in the *Forum* to support almost any concept related to our field, and even choose a preferred side: pro or con. Dr. Carlos Puig has cautioned that non-medical personnel working outside of our field could use the *Forum* for accusational gain. Although the *Forum* is a non-peer reviewed journal, outsiders often consider the opinions expressed therein as fact.

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## To Submit an Article or Letter to the Forum Editors

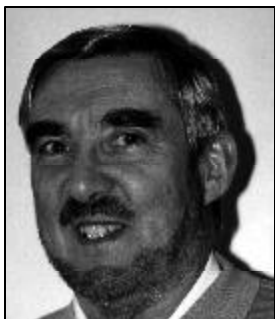
Please send submissions via a 3½" disk or e-mail, double space and use a 12 point type size. Remember to include all photos and figures referred to in your article. For e-mail submissions, be sure to ATTACH your file(s)—do not embed it in the e-mail itself. We prefer e-mail submissions with the appropriate attachments.

Submit all North American entries (Canada, USA, Mexico) to:  
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Hot Springs, Arkansas 71913  
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*Submission deadline for the March/April issue is February 10; May/June is April 10.*

# Notes from the Editor Emeritus



Richard Shiell, MBBS  
Melbourne, Australia

The Hawaii meeting was another outstanding success for the ISHRS and full marks go to Paul Rose and his able helpers for putting on such an interesting program.

Sitting in the quiet of my study two weeks later, I ask myself the obvious questions: "Was it worth the trip?" and "What pearls did you take away with you?"

The first point is easy because I get a great deal of enjoyment from meeting old friends again, so for me, in spite of the expense, "The Big One" is an annual event not to be missed.

On the academic side, there are always pearls to be picked up and strangely, the more one already knows about our field, the more likely you are to pick up new points that can help in one's practice. This might seem strange, and I notice that some beginners get bored and skip lectures to bask in the sunshine. I have no difficulty sitting through all the talks and panel discussions. I think it is because the mind is not like a sponge that has a finite capacity but more like snowball rolling downhill. The more it contains, the more it can pick up per revolution.

## Dense Packing

The density issue was settled once and for all when David Seager brought a patient to Hawaii who had received some 3,000 FUs to the front half of his scalp in a single sitting. There is no doubt whatsoever that in skilled hands and with a suitable patient, it is possible to achieve very good density and naturalness in a single pass. There was no need to count hairs, the magnificent result was obvious to all who saw it and

once again David has "raised the bar" to new heights.

It is not essential to use such dense packing in all cases of course, but, as with the running of the four-minute mile, now that David has demonstrated that it can be done successfully, it will soon become relatively commonplace. Unfortunately, an inevitable side effect of this trend may be an increase in scalp necrosis and poor hair growth as not all patients will have the scalp circulation to support such density. It takes experience in the physician as well as technical skill in the assistants to achieve such outstanding results safely and consistently.

## The Pendulum Swings

It was with considerable pleasure that I noted that the anti-reduction pendulum has ceased its outward journey and is returning to a more sensible position. Gerard Seery reminded us there is nothing inherently wrong with one or two centrally sited alopecia reductions, it was just that surgeons got carried away and patients received "too much of a good thing." Stretchback can be minimized by the use of galeal anchor sutures, and the benefits can be obtained without the negative aspects of scalp distortion. With increasing use of the alopecia reduction procedure, perhaps more surgeons will be tempted to try the Frechet Extender. This appears to have been a great invention that arrived on the scene just as the use of reductions was declining and is little used except by the inventor himself.

## Awards

I was delighted when Sheldon Kabaker was presented with the Manfred Lucas Award for lifetime service to our profession. With over 25 years in the field, he has been a prolific contributor to our craft, particularly in the realm of flaps and reductions. Along with his many papers on all aspects of scalp surgery,

he was a Foundation Board Member in 1993 and 6<sup>th</sup> President of the ISHRS in 1998-99.

The Platinum Follicle Award went to Brazilian Carlos Uebel who, although unsung for many years, has been belatedly recognized as a principle instigator of the swing to very large numbers of small grafts. Although first presented in 1984, his work received little notice until popularized by the Moser Clinic of Vienna and Bonn in the early 1990s. The technique was given further impetus by Bill Rassman and the NHI Group in the mid-1990s. The importance of the follicular unit was eventually recognized and the precision of Bob Limmer's 1987 work on stereoscopic dissection was added to complete the picture. After seeing some of the transplantation handiwork in Hawaii it is difficult to imagine where we can go from here.

It gave me great pleasure to watch my friend and fellow countryman Russell Knudsen receive the Golden Follicle Award. Russell is one of the best-known members of our Society and has put more into the ISHRS than anyone can possibly imagine. He was a Foundation Board Member in 1993, Secretary in 1995, Nashville Meeting Convenor in 1996, and 5<sup>th</sup> President in 1997-98. He has served on many committees and if that was not enough, took on the role of Co-Editor of the *Forum* with Dow Stough in 1999. He has written a number of scientific papers and book chapters, and runs a busy practice in several cities of Australia and New Zealand. He has managed all that and yet still keeps his sense of humor. Quite a guy!

## Artificial Hairs

I have had an interesting year experimenting with the new Z-type fibres from the Nido Corporation of Japan. They appear to be everything that the manufacturers claim them to be. Exceedingly fine and strong,

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