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The International Hair Transplant Video Forum offers you three sets of professionally produced tapes. These

tapes take the viewer through the entire spectrum of hair transplantation from patient selection and design to the latest in micrografts, minigrafts, flaps, scalp reductions, scalp lifts and tissue expansion.

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DILATORS VS. NON-DILATORS

by B. L. Limmer, M.D. San Antonio, Texas

The following are my thoughts regarding the controversy of dilators vs. non-dilators. As you are well aware, we have been doing extensive micrografting for four years, transplanting in an average four hour session, between 400 and 700 micrografts. We have tried the technique with and without dilators. It is our opinion that the disadvantages of dilators far outweigh the advantages. We currently use 16 gauge stainless steel dilators of our own making only as hemostatic devices when we transect small arterial vessels with the 16 and 18 gauge needles. Beyond the use of dilators as hemostatic surgical instruments, we have abandoned the use of dilators totally.

There are obvious advantages to uses of dilators. By placing dila-

tors in the tunnel created by the insertion and retraction of a needle, bleeding is immediately eliminated and a clean surgical field is maintained. Leaving the dilator in place for a period of time, additionally dilates the caliber of the tunnel. When the dilator is removed, this tunnel tends to stay quite patent for a significant period of time allowing for ease of placement of the micrograft. After placement of the grafts, the walls of the tunnel slowly collapse and we have not found adherence of the graft to the wall of the dilator tunnel to pose a problem; that is, we have not lost grafts due to the tunnel being too large and the grafts slipping out of it.

The major disadvantage of dilators from our perspective is the reduction in efficiency. Insertion and retraction of a needle and immediate insertion of the micrograft into the needle tunnel requires approximately half the time that insertion and retraction of the needle, placement of the dilator, subsequent removal of the dilator, and insertion of the micrograft requires. For this reason alone, we have abandoned dilators. Were we doing other elements of a procedure such as placing incisional slit grafts or standard round plugs posteriorly in the scalp, we might conceivably find a true advantage to placing dilators in the frontal hairline while we completed the other steps of the procedure. However, since we have abandoned all other forms of grafting in favor of totally micrografic techniques for the entire area to be transplanted, we have found dilators to be a significant disadvantage because of the additional time required for their use.

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I have changed camps. I have not used dilators since Rio.

Editor, O'Tar Norwood

HAIR TRANSPLANT *forum*

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