

This is your Last Issue Unless You  
**Renew Your Subscription**

See Page 21 for Details!

## Scalp Reductions: Are They Necessary?

by O'Tar T. Norwood, M.D.

This issue will discuss the value of scalp reductions. A frank, open discussion is long overdue on this controversial subject. Doctors coming into the profession get diametrically opposing views from prominent, good, experienced surgeons and do not know what to think.

I had planned to devote the entire issue to scalp reductions, but there is too much material for that, and by having it in two or three issues there will be a chance for debate and response. Also, to keep the *forum* current, it must respond to previous articles and continue to print new material.

### My View

"The problem is that the argument for doing reductions looks so logical on paper that it is difficult to make a theoretical case against them. *It is only after you have done a few hundred cases and have looked fairly and objectively at the results, months and years later, that you begin to have doubts*". This statement is from a letter to me from Richard Shiell

(Melbourne, Australia) several months ago and exactly expresses my opinion. I started scalp reductions in 1982 and was a fierce promoter of them until about five years ago, and then I began to have doubts. I found myself doing fewer and fewer of them. Gradually, I noticed I had to force myself to do one. I kept thinking about dealing with the problems. Also, after a year or so I became aware that they did not seem to look much different than they did before the scalp reductions. I could not predict which patients would scar and it did not always seem to be related to tension, although every time I got too much tension, I got too much scar. I think that if you close totally without tension you are probably not going to get enough out to make the procedure worthwhile.

All the problems described by Norwood, Shiell, and Morrison, in 1982 still apply and there have been some additions.

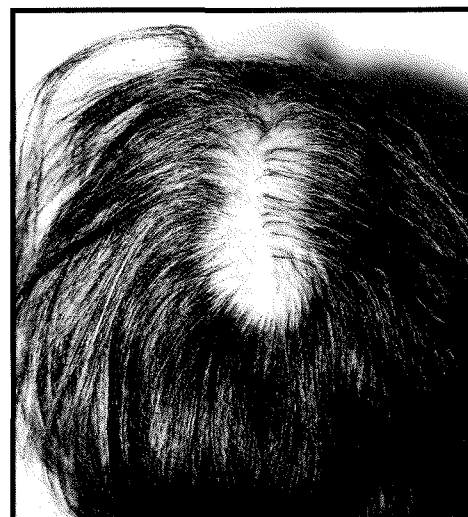


Figure 1. Ten years after 4 reductions. Illustrates progress of male pattern baldness, improper hair direction and lack of uniform orientation of hair in scar.

Photo by Dr. Richard Shiell

(Continued on page 2)