

## IN THIS ISSUE

Past Presidents Reflect on 30 Years of the ISHRS

Review of the 30th World Congress of the ISHRS

## The “Punching-Out” Technique to Reduce the FUT Scar

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*This paper was presented during the 30th World Congress of the ISHRS in Panama.*

### ABSTRACT

A widened scar from a previous strip-removal procedure (follicular unit transplant) is a commonly encountered complaint from patients coming in for a second hair restoration surgery. Options for addressing widened scars have included surgical scar revision, transplanting the scar with follicular units, and scalp micropigmentation. The authors present a new approach, where the scar may be thinned with a punching-out technique followed by resuturing the area. Advantages of the technique include that the time spent on this procedure is usually less than 10-15 minutes, it utilizes skills and equipment that most hair restoration surgeons already have, and it also does not use additional precious follicular units. Our experience using this technique in 58 patients showed improved appearance of the scar.

**Keywords:** follicular unit excision (FUE), follicular unit transplant (FUT), “punch-out” technique, scar revision

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### INTRODUCTION

Follicular unit transplantation (FUT) by the strip technique is an established procedure that is still widely used in the correction of androgenetic baldness in Brazil and worldwide. In its execution, it is necessary to resect an ellipse of scalp skin from the donor area to obtain the follicular units (FUs), resulting in a scar, which is usually well hidden under the hairs in the occipital and temporal region. The widening of these scars is the most common complaint related to the FUT technique, corresponding to up to 25% of the complications found (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup>

This paper describes a relatively fast and practical scar revision technique in which follicular unit excision (FUE) is used with a “punch out” technique. The senior author shares his experience using this “punch out” FUE technique to revise unsightly FUT scars with excellent aesthetic results in 58 patients.

### METHOD & MATERIALS

When carrying out hair transplantation using the FUE technique, the extraction of the FUs is performed with a punch. The punch removes a circular segment of skin with a thickness that often varies between 0.8 and 1.0mm. The power of skin contraction observed in the remodeling phase leads to the complete closure of these orifices in the first 24-48 hours.

By the same principle, we imagined that in a widened scar, we could remove a large amount of scar tissue using the same punch and achieve a natural reduction in the width of the scar. We began using FUE punches in FUT scars to determine if this method was effective.

In the first cases, we allowed healing to occur naturally and observed an improvement in scar appear-

FIGURE 1. Enlarged scar



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31<sup>ST</sup> WORLD CONGRESS  
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