New Research Finds Hair Grafting a Promising Therapy for Chronic Leg Ulcers - International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery Awards Research Grant

A new pilot study conducted by a physician member of the ISHRS has found hair follicle grafting can help treat patients with non-healing chronic leg ulcers. This cutting-edge research was partially funded by ISHRS, which offers research grants for the purpose of relevant clinical research relating to hair restoration.

Geneva, IL (PRWEB) May 27, 2015 -- While hair transplantation has been used successfully for decades to treat hair loss, a new pilot study conducted by a physician member of the International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery (ISHRS) has found hair follicle grafting can help treat patients with non-healing chronic leg ulcers. This cutting-edge research was partially funded by ISHRS, which offers research grants for the purpose of relevant clinical research relating to hair restoration.

In the past decade, numerous scientific studies have corroborated clinical evidence showing a direct link between the human hair follicle and the wound healing process. The objective of this new research pilot study was to evaluate the feasibility and efficacy of punch hair grafts harvested from the scalp and transplanted in the wound bed of chronic non-healing leg ulcers.

“Clinicians have observed for quite some time that the healing of skin wounds starts around the hair follicles, and wounds made in hairy skin areas heal faster than those in non-hairy skin,” explained Francisco Jiménez, MD, a hair restoration surgeon in Canary Islands, Spain. “Taking the principles of hair restoration surgery where hair grafts are transplanted in areas of the scalp experiencing hair loss in order to regrow hair, we’ve used these same hair grafts to initiate wound healing in chronic leg ulcers that are traditionally difficult to treat.”

In 10 patients with recalcitrant non-healing ulcers who were treated in the pilot study, a 27% ulcer area reduction in the experimental square (transplanted with hair punch grants) was observed at the 18-week end point of the study compared to a 6.5% ulcer area reduction in the control square. Improvement of clinical symptoms – appearance of granulation tissue, wound border reactivation, and a lesser amount of oozing – was noted in 7 out of 10 cases.¹

“This study demonstrated that transplantation of hair follicle punch grafts in the wound bed of chronic ulcers represents a feasible alternative for inducing healing of the ulcer,” said Dr. Jiménez. “In addition, this is an easy, ambulatory and minimally invasive surgical technique that can broaden the indications of hair transplantation.”

Recently, this novel therapy has attracted the attention of researchers in other specialties who study wound healing. Newly published scientific papers show similar promising results using hair follicle transplantation for wound healing.

ISHRS at the Forefront of Hair Restoration Education, Research
The ISHRS Scientific Research, Grants & Awards Committee has been recognizing and awarding grants to clinical investigators dedicated to research in hair loss and hair restoration for more than 20 years.
“Hair restoration therapies are some of the most difficult to study in all of medicine,” said Carlos J. Puig, DO, chair of the ISHRS Scientific Research, Grants & Awards Committee. “The ISHRS believes that the specialty needs to focus on developing protocols that provide solid, evidence-based, practice recommendations for hair restoration. To that end, ISHRS has expanded its budget for scientific study grants to its members and allied hair research scientists.”

In addition, many research protocols are now being facilitated by the ISHRS FUE Research Committee, with results of these recommendations to be made available in the coming years. Follicular unit extraction (FUE) is now a popular method for obtaining donor hair for hair transplantation thanks to improvements in instrument technology and technique. Traditionally, FUE is a technique that requires more skill on the part of the physician hair restoration specialist than the technique of strip harvesting, which involves the removal of a strip of scalp tissue bearing hundreds of follicular units.

“With the popularity of FUE donor harvesting, research is needed to determine the optimal techniques and instrumentation, the preferred method of handling the grafts to optimize graft survival, and the impact of FUE on the donor area. The committee is dedicated to designing and implementing studies that will result in the best patient outcomes,” said James A. Harris, MD, chair of the ISHRS FUE Research Committee.

To help patients understand the causes and available treatments for hair loss, the ISHRS has produced a series of videos available on its website (www.ishrs.org) entitled “Why do women lose their hair?” and “Why do guys lose their hair?”

About the ISHRS
Founded in 1993, the International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery (ISHRS) is a non-profit medical association with a membership of over 1,200 members worldwide dedicated to the advancement of the art and science of hair restoration. The mission of the ISHRS is to achieve excellence in patient outcomes by promoting member education, international collegiality, research, ethics, and public awareness. For more information and to locate a physician, visit www.ishrs.org.

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