An Innovative Training Model for Practicing Hairline Designing

Jyoti Gupta, Gillian Roga, Kavish Chouhan, Amrendra Kumar
Department of Dermatology, DermaClinix: The Complete Skin & Hair Solution Center, New Delhi, India

Abstract
Hair transplantation has undergone a massive transformation in today's world. Besides advancement in technique there has also been a great increase in the demand for hair transplant. This rise in demand for hair transplant has further led to an increase in the requirement of professionally trained hair transplant surgeons. In this article we have described a new, versatile and simple technique for hair transplant surgeons to effectively practice hairline designing. This innovative technique proves vital in perfecting the art of the recipient area designing for the hairline, eyebrow, beard etc. for a surgeon who is undergoing training as well as for previously trained surgeons to rehearse an old skill to gain further confidence. Besides helping us practice the art of hairline designing this technique also teaches us the correct angle, direction, depth and density of slits which are ideal and thus helps us to be better prepared for the real life scenario.

Keywords: Eyebrow designing, frontal hairline designing, hair transplant training, practice techniques

Introduction
The global increase in the demand for hair transplantation (HT) has led to an increase in demand for trained hair transplant surgeons. As compared to the number of HT centers that are coming up all over the world, the number of training centers still remain scarce. Follicular unit HT has undergone several refinements to achieve its current form.[1] Despite these recent developments, the dearth of precious operating time for the surgeon results in a paucity of teaching time inside the operation theatre. On one hand, we claim that surgical skills cannot be mastered by simple observation, and on the other hand, cadaver training is not easily available. To overcome these problems, simulation-based learning becomes a vital technique. Along with providing an opportunity to teach surgeons, it provides an opportunity to rehearse extensively and gain confidence before entering the operation theater and operating on live patients. It is also a useful method for the surgeons wanting to learn and upgrade new skills. The most crucial step in this surgery is the creation of recipient sites to receive the follicular unit grafts. Keeping this in mind, we have developed a very effective, user-friendly, economical model to learn and practice one of the most important steps in HT, which is the recipient-site area designing.

Training of Recipient-Site Slit Making
Materials used for this training model are a papaya, “cut-to-size” blade, blade holder, and Gentian violet [Figure 1]. However, this innovation can be modified by using other objects such as boiled potato, watermelon, and 21/20 G needles.

The advantages and disadvantages of other models as compared to papaya have been summarized in Table 1.

Traditionally, punches, Nokor needles,[1] and Yeh needles[2] have been used for recipient-site creation. Custom-cut blades[3] were then developed for creating a perfectly fitting slit to receive the follicular unit grafts.

Method of slit designing on papaya:
1. To practice different densities of recipient-site slits, make small square boxes of size 1 × 1 cm on papaya.

Address for correspondence: Dr. Gillian Roga, DermaClinix: The Complete Skin & Hair Solution Center, E-13, Basement, Defence Colony, Near Andrews Ganj Bus Stop, New Delhi, Delhi 110024, India. E-mail: gillyroga@gmail.com

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2. To practice the frontal hairline or eyebrow designing of recipient-area slits, we need to trace the required template on the papaya using a pen or Gentian violet.

3. Hold the blade holder in dominant hand in pen-holding position, keeping the sharp edge of the blade at an angle of 30°–45° make an incision up to a depth of 4 mm.

Scalp hair restoration

Step-by-step approach for practicing the frontal hairline designing on a papaya is as follows [4] [Figure 2]:

1. Mark three points to replicate the midfrontal point (MFP) and both frontal temporal angles (FTA), and connect these points with a gently curved line.

2. Make demarcations showing the transition zone (TZ), defined zone (DZ), frontal tuft (FT), micro- and macro-irregularities, and sentinel hairs.

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of other models as compared to papaya

| Models   | Advantage                                                                 | Disadvantage                                        |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Papaya   | 1. Texture, size, and shape is comparable to human scalp<br>2. Color is suitable to appreciate the slits after staining with Gentian violet<br>3. Suitable for designing whorl | 1. Surface of papaya is marked with many blotches<br>2. Shelf life of the papaya is short |
| Watermelon | 1. Shelf life of watermelon is longer                                         | 1. Hard outer watermelon rind makes it difficult to practice slit making<br>2. Texture of watermelon is not comparable to human scalp<br>3. Color of the rind being dark makes it difficult to appreciate the slits |
| Boiled potato | 1. After peel is removed, potato serves as a good background for appreciating slit pattern on staining<br>2. Its size is suited for eyebrow designing | 1. Not suitable for hairline designing of scalp |
Angle and direction of slits

Angle refers to the degree of emergence at which the hair exits the scalp, whereas direction refers to the way the hair points when leaving the scalp. Angle and direction of hairline slits are given in Table 2.

With respect to direction of blade, slits can be made in either sagittal [Figure 3] or coronal [Figure 4] plane. With respect to pattern of arrangement of slits, they can be made in linear/curvilinear pattern or staggered/brick pattern [Figure 5]. Incision density for recipient area shows densities of 20, 30, 40, and 50 FU/cm² [Figure 6]. Thus, keeping in mind the above instructions, the pattern for recipient-site creation of the frontal hairline can be practiced on a papaya [Figure 7].

Eyebrow restoration

Step-by-step approach for practicing eyebrow designing on a papaya is as follows:

1. Draw two symmetrical outlines of left and right eyebrows by tracing the head, body, peak, and tail of the eyebrow.

Recipient-site slits size: 0.6–0.8 mm in “herringbone” pattern.

Graft count: 100–400 grafts per eyebrow.

Angle and direction of eyebrow slits are given in Table 3.

With the help of these guidelines, we may be able to master the intricate pattern of slit making to create the recipient zone for the eyebrow as shown in Figure 8.

Table 2: Angle and direction of hairline slits

| Part of the frontal hairline | Angle | Direction                      |
|------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| Frontal hairline             | 15°–20° | Anterior, slightly left/right |
| Midscalp                     | 30°–45° | Forward toward the nose       |
| Lateral hairline             | 10°–15° | Forward up to the FTA         |
| Temporal hairline            | 5°–10°  | Inferior lateral toward the ear |
Conclusion

To keep up with the fast-pacing demand of HT across the globe, better training methods are required. This simple innovative module is a cost-effective, acceptable, and easily replicable refinement in creating hair transplant recipient sites without compromising on the aesthetics. The only drawback of this method is that we may not be trained to deal with the bleeding and oozing that occur while making slits in a patient. Nevertheless, besides, helping us practice the art of designing hairlines in different recipient areas, this method also teaches us the importance of using the appropriate angle, direction, depth, and density of incisions so that we may be confident and better equipped in doing so in a real-life scenario.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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