Staples for Intra-Operative Skin Retraction in Hand Surgery

J. K. O'Neill · P. Robinson · G. E. B. Giddins

Received: 12 November 2013 / Accepted: 4 December 2013 / Published online: 13 December 2013
© Society of the Hand & Microsurgeons of India 2013

Abstract In certain situations staples are a quick and effective method of retracting the skin to give access to the operative site. Staples, once placed, are more reliable and predictable than an assistant with a skin hook. Furthermore, their use frees up the assistant to perform other tasks including further deeper tissue retraction. Staples pinch the skin rather than piercing it and this is especially of value in patients on steroid treatment or with thin skin that may bruise easily. They leave no discernible marks on removal.

Keywords Hand · Retraction · Staples · Skin hook

Skin retraction in hand surgery is usually undertaken with skin hooks or retaining sutures. Tables with detachable (Rotalok table) skin hooks have been designed for hand surgery to optimise skin retraction and reduce the need for an assistant.

As an alternative, the senior author has found that in certain situations staples are a quick and effective method of retracting the skin to give access to the operative site.

Staples, once placed, are more reliable and predictable than an assistant with a skin hook. Figure 1 shows staples in use for skin retraction prior to MCP joint replacement surgery. Furthermore, their use frees up the assistant to perform other tasks including further deeper tissue retraction. Staples pinch the skin rather than piercing it and this is especially of value in

Fig. 1 Staples in use for skin retraction prior to MCP joint replacement surgery

This work has not been presented at any meeting and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

J. K. O'Neill · P. Robinson · G. E. B. Giddins
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Royal United Hospital, Bath,
UK

J. K. O'Neill (✉)
Department of Plastic Surgery, Queen Victoria Hospital, East
Grinstead, UK
e-mail: jenniferoneill@hotmail.com

patients on steroid treatment or with thin skin that may bruise easily. They leave no discernible marks on removal.

Staples have been described for controlling hair in scalp surgery [1] and modifications of skin hooks to help with skin retraction have been published [2, 3] but this technique is not widely known and may prove useful to others.

References

1. O'Neill JK, Lee S (2010) Controlling hair during craniofacial surgery requiring scalp incisions. *J Plast Reconstr Aesthet Surg* 63(3):e288. doi:[10.1016/j.bjps.2009.08.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjps.2009.08.004)
2. Rogers SN, Davies ES (1995) An alternative method of intraoperative skin retraction: the Walton fish hook. *Br J Oral Maxillofac Surg* 33(5):323
3. Laffreniere R (1991) A new skin hook retainer as an aid to skin flap retraction. *Surg Gynaecol Obstet* 173(6):497–498