Updates on Asian Scar Management and Treatment Guidelines

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The Asian Scar Treatment Guidelines

A combination of prolonged inflammation, increased tension and genetic predisposition may lead to excessive scarring. Ethnicity may also be an important factor. Specifically, Asians have been described to have unique skin characteristics that predispose them to scarring. They exhibit a thicker dermis with greater collagen density and propensity to fibroblast proliferation. Asians also have larger melanosomes that make them more prone to hyperpigmentation after a cutaneous injury. Thus, to manage scars in Asians, expectations must be set realistically, because their scars are thicker with scars.

The recent publication of the paper, “Update on Scar Management: Guidelines for Treating Asian Patients,” makes specific recommendations for treating Asian scars, and emphasizes the importance of initiating scar prevention in all Asian patients (Table). The guidelines also recognize the significant efficacy of a silicone-based gel therapy in Asian patients, highlighting its ease of use and improved patient compliance when compared with silicone gel sheeting. Silicone gels were also assessed to be as effective as silicone gel sheeting in preventing hypertrophic scars, and that in select patients, silicone gel therapy is recommended as first-line treatment. Aside from decreasing scar height and erythema and improving pliability, silicone gels have also been shown to improve the subjective symptoms of pain, itching and tension associated with scars. The guidelines will hopefully help practitioners make optimal and evidence-based treatment decisions for their patients to prevent excessive scarring and improve treatment outcomes.

Table. Recommendations for scar management in Asian patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scar type</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All scars</td>
<td>In select patients, silicone gel therapy is recommended as first-line treatment for the management of both hypertrophic and keloid scars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypertrophic scars</td>
<td>Silicone-based gel is as effective as silicone gel sheeting. Multiple sessions of lower fluences of pulsed-dye lasers are recommended for prevention of hyperpigmentation in Asian patients with hypertrophic scars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keloids</td>
<td>Steroid monotherapy is effective for symptom management. Combined excision plus steroid injections or other adjuvant therapies is effective and safe. Keloid sites with a high risk of recurrence should be treated with escalated doses of radiation and post-treatment self-management</td>
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Scar prevention post-surgery

Prevention is always better than treatment, and in terms of scars, good and early wound management yields better scar outcomes. Planning the incision, with the consideration of several factors, also determines the resulting scar. Factors to note are as follows: anatomic site of injury, symptoms involved, degree of psychological distress and functional impairment.

Treatment is best commenced when the scar is immature but with the overlying epithelium already intact. This can be achieved via a multimodal approach to scar therapy. For new scars, silicone gels or sheeting may be used, together with sun avoidance. An enhanced silicone gel formulation – Dermatix® Ultra – has vitamin C that not only stimulates collagen repair for healing, but also blocks melanin formation that helps lighten scars. Meanwhile, steroid injections, surgery and radiotherapy should be reserved for more problematic scars.

SSPONSORED SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS

At a Menarini-sponsored symposium during the 19th World Congress on Gynecology and Infertility held at the Venetian Macau Hotel last February 22, 2014, experts discussed the latest information about Asian scar management, with particular emphasis on the recently published Asian scar treatment guidelines.

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Scar management and prevention in Obstetrics-Gynecology

Hypertrophic scars are common problems encountered in postcesarean section patients. The risk for scarring is influenced by several factors including age, skin color, family history, location and size of the scar and duration of inflammation. It affects patients both physically and psychosocially, and should not be trivialized.

As with any surgery, a proactive preventive approach on scar management should always be employed in obstetric and gynecologic procedures. Silicone-based therapy is considered as a gold standard in treatment. Based on experience, the use of the non-invasive silicone gel Dermatix® Ultra has been superior in its ease of use and patient acceptability in obstetric and gynecologic procedures.

References