Does Lymphangiogenesis Occur through Incisional Scars?

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Lymphangiogenesis is crucial in the homeostasis of interstitial fluids, immunity, and metabolism. Also, its importance in wound healing has been reported in animal models and clinical studies. However, the current understanding of lymphangiogenesis through incisional scars is still limited. We present indocyanine green (ICG) lymphography images near a 16-year-old Pfannenstiel scar of a 43-year-old female patient. Informed consent was obtained from the patient for publication of this image report and accompanying images.

The patient underwent a total mastectomy and immediate breast reconstruction using a free transverse rectus abdominis myocutaneous flap. ICG was injected intradermally at seven points: three points superior to, three points superolateral to, and one below the inguinal ligament. Drainage of the ICG was captured using Fluobeam near-infrared fluorescence imaging camera (Fluoptics, Cambridge, MA). Lymphatic drainage from injection point 1 traveled in the cephalic direction, while injection points 2 and 3 (above...
One hour delayed ICG lymphography after flap elevation showed multiple lymphatic vessels near the superficial fascia. Interestingly, no lymphatic vessel was visible near the Pfannenstiel scar (Fig. 2, above the line). ICG quantification showed pooling of the ICG in points 1 and 2, as well as collateral drainage in the cephalic direction (Fig. 3).

In animal models, lymphangiogenesis has been evident near the wound edge 3 to 5 days after incision with a temporary increase of new sprouts from existing lymphatic vessels. On the contrary, our images show that human lymphangiogenesis does not occur through incisional scars. Further animal and clinical studies on lymphangiogenesis near incisional scars are needed.

Authors' Contributions
S.L. contributed with data curation and writing the original draft. B.N. took part in writing the original draft. C.Y.H. was involved in conceptualization and reviewing and editing the manuscript. J.K.-h.P. took part in conceptualization, data curation, and reviewing and editing the manuscript. Y.M. was involved in conceptualization, and reviewing and editing the manuscript.

Ethical Approval
This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Seoul National University Bundang Hospital (IRB# B2202-739-701). Written informed consent was obtained for this article.

Conflict of Interest
None declared.

References