Author’s response to reviews

Title: Primary Graft Failure Associated with Epithelial Downgrowth: A Case Report

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
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Re: Primary Graft Failure Associated with Epithelial Downgrowth: A Case Report
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To the Members of The Editorial Board:

Attached please find our revised manuscript entitled “Primary Graft Failure Associated with Epithelial Downgrowth: A Case Report”. We appreciate the suggestions of the reviewers and have modified the manuscript accordingly.

Reviewer 1 (Dr. Mooy)

1. Abstract: Mention the histopathologic result of the initial host button followed by that of the failed corneal graft.

   The Abstract has been modified accordingly.

2. Abstract: Delete line 6;”DNA…graft.”

   The remainder of the sentence after the word DNA has been deleted.

3. Abstract: Conclusion is speculative.

   While the first sentence in the Conclusion is a definitive statement, the second sentence is necessarily speculative, but is supported by the findings in the manuscript. If the reviewer feels strongly that the second sentence should be deleted, the authors would be happy to do so.

4. Results, page 7, cut and paste after line 3, after…dystrophy

   Results. Pathologic Analysis. Page 8. The sentence “Serial sectioning of the host corneal button did not demonstrate the presence of epithelial cells on the posterior corneal surface” has been moved to be the second sentence of this section.

5. Discussion, page 8, lines 12-14: Full thickness suture has been performed during the previous cataract surgery. In Figure 2 the cataract scar does not seem to be completely excised. Reactivation of an entrapped island of
epithelium from the deeper part of the cataract scar may have been a source…

The patient had a cataract extraction performed through a sutureless limbus-based clear corneal incision. The suture tracts depicted in Figure 2 are those corresponding to the corneal transplant sutures used to secure the donor corneal button. As the 8 mm trephination of the patient’s cornea did not extend to the periphery of the cornea, the cataract surgery incision is not seen in Figure 2.

6. **Background line 4: add PGF**

(PGF) has been added to the background section following the words primary graft failure.

**Reviewer 2 (Dr. Mamalis)**

1. **In the case presentation, the authors state that there was no aqueous leak from the wound…. But do not note if a Seidel test was actually done.**

   *Case presentation. Page 4.* The text has been modified to state:

   The anterior chamber was deep, and Seidel testing demonstrated no aqueous leakage from either the wound or suture tracks.

2. **In the pathology section, the authors need to state that the serial section were done to evaluate the suture tracks completely to make sure that there was no sign of epithelial downgrowth on any of the suture tracks. Similarly there is no mention of any sign of epithelial downgrowth at the cut edge of the surface of the cornea transplant button.**

   *Results. Page 8.* The text has been modified to state:

   Serial sectioning of the excised donor corneal button failed to reveal the source of the epithelial downgrowth, however, as epithelial cells were not noted to extend from the anterior to the posterior corneal surface along the suture tracks or the edges of the corneal button.

3. **The authors conclude in both the manuscript and in the abstract that the epithelial downgrowth was “subsequent to instead of causing diffuse endothelial cell loss and primary graft failure.” While this is the potential reason….the tone of the conclusions should be tempered…**

   *Discussion. Page 11.* We acknowledge that there is no definite proof for our conclusions, although they are reasonable based on the studies detailed in this manuscript. We have tempered our statements as mentioned above (Reviewer 1. Point 3) in the Abstract. Additionally, we have softened the conclusion with the change in the wording of the second sentence in the last paragraph from “The
The complete absence of endothelial cells on the excised donor button indicates…” to “The complete absence of endothelial cells on the excised donor button suggests…”.

I would like to thank the reviewers for their helpful suggestions, which have significantly improved the clarity of this manuscript.

Sincerely,

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