Reviewer's report

Title: Expanded Tri-lobed Flap for Ear Reconstruction: An Animal Model in Rabbit

Version: 2 Date: 13 August 2003

Reviewer: Takatoshi Yotsuyanagi

Reviewer's report:

General

Thank you for allowing me to review this manuscript. Firstly I agree with the authors' opinion that there is few animal model for flaps in ear reconstruction. I also hope that the design, safety, and vascular patterns of skin flaps used for ear reconstruction should be confirmed by animal studies. It would be certain that there have been no animal model for tri-lobed flap until now.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Methods and Results can be easily understood for me but I feel that the other parts (title, background, conclusion, and discussion) is not supported from the data. Namely, I think this study can not be an applicable model for human ear reconstruction. If the authors think to use the tri-lobed flap for ear reconstruction in the clinical cases, they also should challenge to reconstruct a human ear shape in rabbit model. I do think that there are no worth to reconstruct a rabbit ear in rabbit model. It is only the one of the flap model which is not related with ear. Please refer the manuscripts as below.


Certainly the skin flaps or the combination of skin flaps is useful for ear reconstruction. However, the results of this study is a comparison of expanded flap group and non-expanded flap group. Accordingly, the important point of this manuscript would be placed on a blood supply of expanded flap or the safety of tri-lobed flap, or other. The main point of the discussion should be placed on the signification of expansion when using tri-lobed flap. I recommend that the applicable title should be simply "The study of expanded tri-lobed flap in a rabbit model". As there have been many studies for various skin flaps and expanded skin flaps, I recommend the discussion can be mainly developed from the comparison with other flaps. Perhaps, the conclusion is that the expanded tri-lobed flap is available when the donor site is limited in the small area and when the complicated reconstruction is necessary. In addition, the author should mention how to use the tri-lobed flap for ear reconstruction if possible.

Advice on publication: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

None