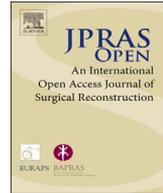




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Short communication

Grapes are for more than wine

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Dear Sirs,

As a young, aspiring plastic surgery resident, one is constantly pushed to develop the skills needed to perform more advanced procedures. Indeed, Danish guidelines for education of plastic surgeons, state that “the resident should constantly perform on the upper limits of his/her skills”.

While demanding, it represents the principle of «accelerated learning», the idea being that having to solve progressively more difficult tasks by oneself, increases the rate of learning. Of course, this cannot be achieved without proper tutoring.

Some elements, however, are hard to bypass by this strategy, where practice and meticulous repetitions is the only way to move forward. Of course, one should always keep track on the theoretical skills, but even the most basic procedures of micro surgery require a certain number of practice sessions before you get used to proper movements.

For many residents, the theoretical knowledge is readily available, in literature and instructional videos. However, getting the practical training is sometimes a challenge. Certain departments do not perform micro surgery, and therefore do not have the equipment. And in some cases, for various reasons, equipment is not readily available for the resident to practice with. For a resident with lack of available micro surgery practice, the practical training could end up stalling at this point [Figure 1](#).

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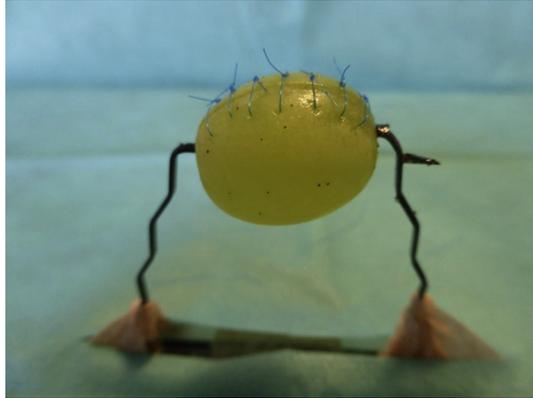


Figure 1. The grapes with nylon 6-0, to better visualize the sutures.



Figure 2. A blueberry, a grape and a tomato, all with nylon 6-0, to visualize the sutures.

We suggest using the grape as a practice medium to promote practical skills in the lack of proper micro surgical equipment. [Figure 2](#).

The grape is a fruiting berry that has been cultivated for some 8000 years, and I personally enjoy it most in the processed form of wine. In my search for micro surgical skills, however, I found the grape to be quite useful.

When a grape is perfectly ripe, the flesh put enough tension on the skin, for the skin to diverge when incised, but it is still possible to close the skin defect by adapting the sides of the incision. The challenge lies however, in the fragility of the skin. It is durable enough to be adapted when incised, but still so fragile it will tear if you as much as try to pull it.

As such we have found the grape to be an excellent practicing tool when exercising basic micro surgical techniques.