



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Burn Model System Newsletter

Spring 2008



What is Hypertrophic Scarring?

Hypertrophic scars are those that may occur following a deep burn injury. These scars are typically raised above the level of non-injured skin (as much as a several millimeters), reddened, tender, itchy, and can contract (pull

together causing limits in range of motion when the scar is over a joint). Hypertrophic scarring can lead to loss of function, impairment, disability, and difficulties when returning to work and recreational activities. They

are considered to be one of the most negative outcomes of a deep burn injury. Our understanding of why they develop in some people and not in others is limited. Furthermore, our ability to prevent or provide early treatment is also very limited.

Burn Injury Information Group

The burn injury informational support group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 1-2:00pm in room 8EH-50 at Harborview Medical Center. This

group is open to all burn survivors and their families. Upcoming meetings are June 18, July 16, August 20, & September 17. It is sponsored by the Northwest Burn

Foundation and it is at no charge. You can also participate by phone; contact Dr. Askay and she will provide all necessary information (no long distance charge will apply).

Provider Profile: Loren Engrav, MD.

Dr. Engrav is a Professor of Surgery/Plastic Surgery at the University of Washington and is the past Chief of the Division of Plastic Surgery and past Associate Director of the Harborview Burn Center. Dr. Engrav has over 125 published articles concerning burn care and reconstruction.

Dr. Engrav is the primary investigator on a grant that has as one of its projects, a study that aims to validate an animal model for studying the genetics of scarring. The funding agency for this grant is the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) in the Office of Special Education and

Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education.

Dr. Kathy Zhu joins him in this effort to validate the Duroc/Yorkshire animal model for future studies concerning scar genetics, prevention, and treatment.

Most recently, Dr. Engrav has been joined by two visiting scholars and plastic surgeons who are assisting him and Dr. Zhu in this study. Dr. Maria Luiza Ramos is from Sao Paulo, Brazil and Dr. Surawej Numhom is from Thailand. Dr. Ramos will be working with us for one year and Dr. Numhom joins us for three years. They both add much to our research efforts on this very important topic.

Research Update

In April 2006, Dr. Peter Esselman (Professor and Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, University of Washington) and colleagues published a State of the Science report concerning Burn Rehabilitation (see our website for the complete reference).

In this report, the authors write that, "Hypertrophic scarring is an important cause of long-term impairment and disability after burn injuries. There is a need for additional studies to understand the prevalence and risk factors for the development of hypertrophic scarring. The development of more reliable, valid, and objective measures to diagnose and measure the severity of hypertrophic scarring is essential for further research in the area of prevention and treatment.

Our studies here at Harborview are trying to address these issues.

Did You Know?

People of different ethnic and racial backgrounds as well as those of different ages tend to scar differently after a burn injury. Why this is - is not fully known at this time.

Visit our website at

<https://depts.washington.edu/uwnidrr/> for more information.

To reach the UW/HMC Burn Center Clinic, call 206-744-5735.