

Retroauricular lymphadenopathy post micro-needling

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Dear editor: I am sending this short report to complement a recent publication, by the journal of cosmetic dermatology, on 28 September 2018, about micro-needling and lymphadenitis as side effects.

Cervical lymphadenopathy from PRP treatment with micro-needling therapy, by Solomon Geizhals BA, Joseph Grunfeld BA, Hyeokchan Kwon BA, Joshua Fox MD.

Abstract

Procedures of micro-needling and platelet-rich plasma (PRP) are recently gaining popularity and growing internationally, with highly enriched plasma that contains large concentrations of platelets which secrete various growth factors, and is used in a wide variety of surgical and cosmetic procedures, including hair re-growth, facial wrinkles and skin rejuvenation(1,2).

Micro-needling is a simple, reliable and rapid method to rejuvenate facial skin and can induce taut, youthful skin in the long run.

There are different techniques of applying PRP into the skin. However, micro-needling is also used solo or combined with platelet-rich plasma to potentiate patient's cosmetic effects. Micro-needling involves a small tool that uses fine needle sizes to puncture the top skin layer, the epidermis and create micro-tunnels. These micro-wounds stimulate the release of growth factors and induce collagen production.

Although micro-needling therapy is well known and has been used for a while, there are not any reported side effects in the existing literature apart from the transient erythema and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation all of which are scarce, negligible, and limited, regarding side effects.

Summary

I personally tried the micro-needling on my face, with 0.5mm and 1mm size and I noticed personally, development of painful retro-auricular lymph nodes on both sides, or a brief period the following day. I looked up and consulted the internet for any literature reporting a similar incident. However, I could not retrieve any and I was quite certain of the cause of my condition. I thought it could be attributed to the tiny micro tunneling being created by the micro-needle across the skin, where the surface bacteria would get inside and consequently the lymph nodes swell. Though I used antiseptic means for both the skin and the derma roller, it still kept developing when I performed it on my facial skin. Also, I believe it could be the vigorous use and the intensity that could cause this effect. .

I started at that time, to apply the micro-needle in light strokes across my facial skin, in order to avoid the painful uncomfortable incident. Yet, I kept developing painful lymph nodes. I treated myself with a short course of antibiotics to alleviate and shorten the effect and the enlarged painful lymph node.

When I read your article, I realized I have been right in my intuition since two years ago and probably no one had noticed it before. I even told some of my colleagues, who denied and disapproved my observation.

To conclude, micro-needling is a minimally invasive procedure. Therefore, I urge that every individual and every medical practitioner pay more attention to the impending side effects of the procedure, in order to document the cases and report them with their reasoning. Also, to not underestimate the procedure because many think it's a trivial, simple procedure with no potential risks, and it is not.

Additionally, there is no history of this happening before in the existing literature, and thus this would be the first reported case.

It is after all still all empirical and we need to see other colleagues' opinions and experiences. Moreover, not all patients would tell of their experiences. Many for instance will not notice any changes or complaints, or merely let it pass.

Also, larger and more randomized controlled trials are needed with follow-ups to document any side effects. After all, we all learn from new procedures through ourselves and patients.

References

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2. Hashim PW, Levy Z, Cohen JL, Goldenberg G. Microneedling therapy with and without platelet-rich plasma. *Cutis* 2017; 99(4):239-242.