

TITLE: The Versatility of Free Radial Forearm Flap for Head-Neck Reconstruction

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ABSTRACT

Since its description as a free flap, the free radial forearm flap has become a workhorse flap in head and neck reconstruction due to its lack of extra bulk, relative ease of dissection, robust vascularity, malleability and minimal donor site morbidity. This case series illustrates the versatility and reliability of free radial forearm flap in 57 patients who underwent reconstruction of defects in head and neck region following onco-surgical resection between 2013 and 2018. Patient age ranged from 17 to 65 years (mean 41). There were 45 men and 12 women, and follow-up ranged from 2 months to 2 years. The most prevalent neoplasm was squamous cell carcinoma. Free radial forearm flaps were used for reconstruction of defects involving floor of mouth (14 cases), hemiglossectomy (13 cases), buccal mucosa (11 cases), retromolar region (8 cases), upper/lower lip (7 cases) and partial maxillectomy (4 cases). All the patients received post-operative radiation. The facial artery and common facial vein were the most frequent recipient sites for microvascular anastomosis; end-to-end anastomoses were performed in all cases. Complete flap loss occurred in 3 cases, and five patients required re-exploration due to early venous congestion. The donor site healed uneventfully in all patients except two, who had partial skin graft loss and required re-grafting. The radial forearm free flap provides a versatile and reliable option in the reconstructive armamentarium of a plastic surgeon for the defects in the head and neck region. Its low flap loss and complication rates offer the best choice for head-neck reconstruction.

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Mode of Presentation: Oral

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BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Gaurab Ranjan Chaudhuri has passed MBBS and MS in Otorhinolaryngology from University of Calcutta; MCh in Plastic Surgery from Banaras Hindu University. He is presently working as Associate Professor in the Department of Plastic Surgery, R.G. Kar Medical College, Kolkata, India. He has already presented scientific papers at CME and conferences, and published research articles in National and International journals. Total citations -101. He underwent training in Hand and Reconstructive Microsurgery in Singapore. He performed the role of Chief Microvascular Surgeon and Co-Principal Investigator of the project 'North East Silk based bioengineered vascular conduits' funded by department of Biotechnology, Government of India; published in the journal 'Advanced Healthcare Materials' in 2021. He successfully performed replantation of digits and hand following post traumatic amputation as chief microvascular surgeon. He regularly supervises Dissertations of post-doctoral students in Plastic Surgery as Thesis guide and co-guide.

