

Abstract

The Problem of Leech Application in Digital Replantation

Nae Ho Lee, M.D., Kyoung Moo Yang, M.D.

*Department of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery
College of Medicine, Chonbuk National University, Chonju, Korea*

Over the past several years, countless patients have benefitted from the use of leeches in microsurgery. As we know, leeches are used to overcome the problem of venous congestion by creating prolonged localized bleeding uniquely characteristics of leech bite.

Venous congestion, a common complication of digital replantation, often has been treated through surgical repair like arteriovenous anastomosis. The leech produces a number of important substances which contribute to the special property of the bite, including an anticoagulant, a local vasodilator and local anesthetics. The bite usually bleeds for 1 to 2 hours and under special circumstances may bleed for up to 24 hours. So venous congestion is relieved.

However, leeches increase the possibility of infection through their gut content. Infection associated medical leech application is significant risk. Other risk include allergic reaction, adverse psychologic reaction and blood loss requiring transfusion.

The 65 cases of medical leech application were performed between August, 1997 and May, 2000 according to an established protocol. The complication were 18 cases ; infection (13 cases), hemorrhage (2 cases), allergic reaction (1 case), psychologic problem (1 case) and hypochromic anemia (1 case).

Then our study was performed on the base of indication. As a result, *Aeromonas hydrophilia* was cultured from gut of medical leech and *Klebsiella*, *Staphylococcus* and *Pseudomonas* were cultured from media. We present the clinical risk-benefit of the medical leech therapy through several cases following digital replantation.

Key Words : Digital replantation, Medical leech application, Infection

2 62 38
 7 3 12
 2 1
 65

(U.K. Biopharm
).

가

2.

가

(protocol)

(Fig. 1).

- 1) 가
- 2) saline-moistened
- 3) (forcep)
(glove)
- 4) 가 11
(mess) 가 (0.5cm
).
- 5) (bleeding)
- 6) 60%
(alcohol)
- 7) 1
가 26 gauge needle
가 (crust)
- 8) (hematocrit)
24
- 9) 5
- 10) 3 ceftriaxone
(Rocephine) 7

leech)

1997 8 2000

5 65

18

가

가

1.

1997 8 2000 5

18

(Fig. 2) 13

가

가

(bleeding),

(allergic reaction),

(psychologic

(crush injury), guillotine

problem),

(hypochromic

(avulsion injury)

anemia)

(Table 1).

가

Zone I 85%

15% Zone II

20

가

(media) 3

가 가

(smear)

Mac Conkey agar

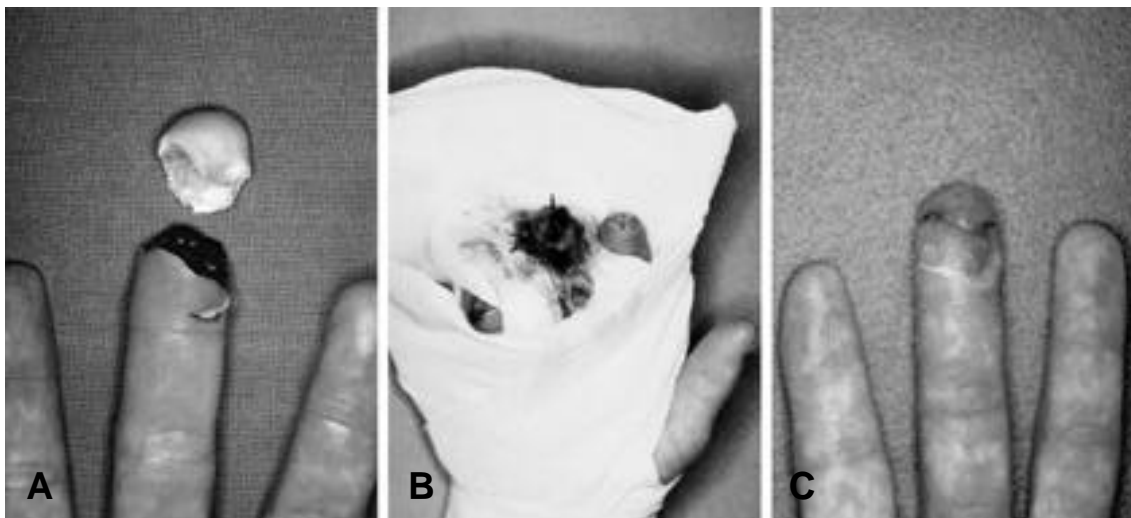


Fig. 1-A. 25-year-old male with left middle fingertip injury (Zone I).

B. Medical leech application in postoperative 2 days later.

C. Postoperative 3 weeks later.

Table 1. Complication of medical leech application

| Complication | Number |
|---------------------|--------|
| Infection | 13 |
| Bleeding | 2 |
| Allergic reaction | 1 |
| Psychologic problem | 1 |
| Hypochromic anemia | 1 |
| Total | 18 |

2500 (Hirudo medicinalis)
가 ,
1,2), 19

(culture)

(skin flap

congestion)

Phylum Annelida

Mac Conkey agar

(colony)

가 ,

hydrophiliā 2

Aeromonas

34

Staphylococcus, Pseudomonas

Klebsiella,

Hirudo medicinalis

3)

(Fig. 3).

3 (jaw)

Klebsiella, Staphylococcus, Pseudomonas

100

(gut)

가

4)

10

5 ~ 15M

5,6)

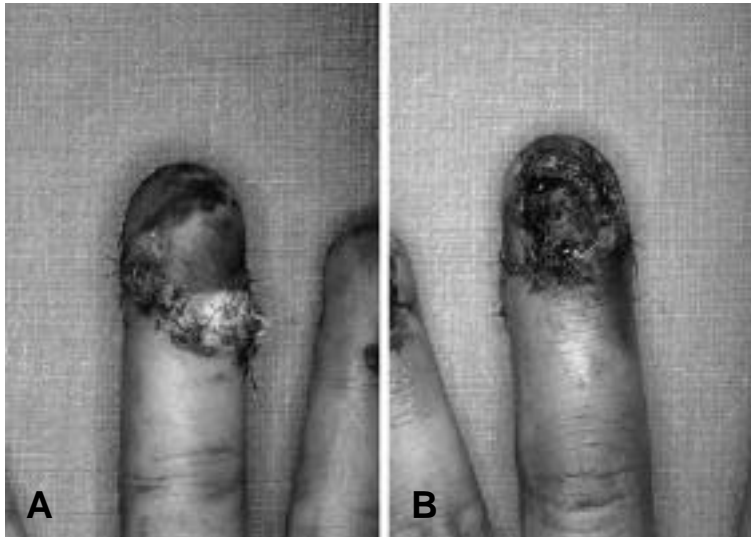


Fig. 2. The infection sign was observed medical leech application 10 days later.
A. volar side view. **B.** dorsal side view.

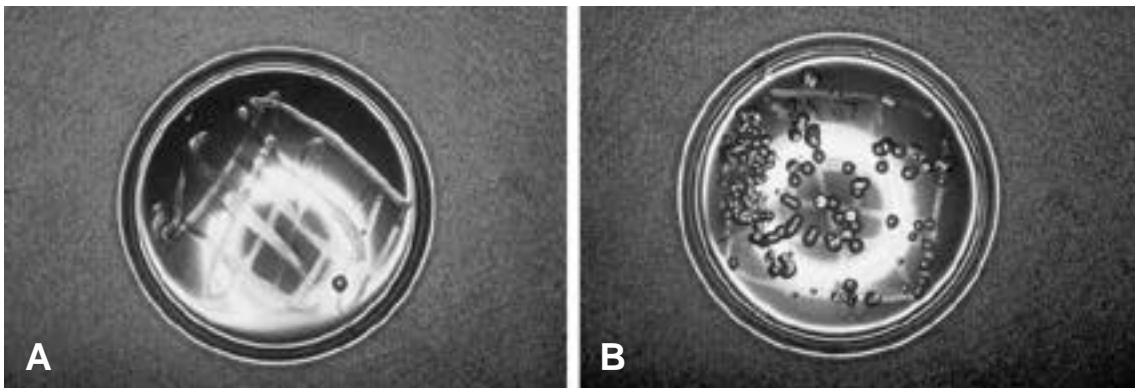


Fig. 3-A. The *Aeromonas hydrophilia* was observed in Mac Conkey agar which was cultured in gut of medical leech.
B. The *Klebsiella*, *Staphylococcus* and *Pseudomonas* were observed in Mac Conkey agar which was cultured in medical leech media.

가 가 가 가 가

(capillary bed) (stasis)

(collateral venous structure)가

(hirudin) 1884 Haycraft⁸⁾
 polypeptide (thrombin)
 (fibrin) 가 (fibrinogen)

(fibrin) 가
^{9,10)}

hyaluronidase¹¹⁾, proteinase
 inhibitors, trypsin-plasmin inhibitors¹²⁾,
 eglins, chymotrypsin inhibitor, subtilisin,
 and granulocytic neutral protein elastase,
 antihistamine¹³⁾

가 가

가

Aeromonas hydrophilia^{14,15)}
 Aeromonas hydrophilia oxidase-positive,
 glucose-fermenting, gram-negative rod

가

(septicemia)가 (hepato-
 biliary system) 가
 가

Aeromonas hydrophilia
 (salvage rate) 30%

Aeromonas hydrophilia가
 cephalosporine ceftriaxone
 (Rocephine) 1gram BID, 50
 mg/kg/day BID

Aeromonas hydrophilia Mac Conkey agar
¹⁶⁾, nonlactase fermenter
 cytochrome C oxidase positive,
 acetamide agar 가

20

Mac Conkey agar
 2 Aeromonas hydrophilia가
 가 media

Mac Conkey agar
 Klebsiella, Staphylococcus, Pseudomonas¹⁷⁾

가

Klebsiella, Staphylococcus, Pseudomonas가

가

가

1) 가
 (infection) (bleeding),
 (allergic reaction),
 (psychologic problem),
 (hypochromic anemia)

2)

Aeromonas hydrophilia
 Staphylococcus,
 Klebsiella, Pseudomonas

3)

REFERENCES

- 1) Raubenheimer O : *Leeches : How to dispense them.* *J Ann Pharm Assoc* 12:338. 1923.
- 2) Heldt TJ : *Allergy to leeches.* *Henry Ford Hosp Med Bull* 9:498, 1961.
- 3) Hegner RW, Engemann JG, eds : *Phylum Annelida, class III : Hirudo medicinalis : The medical leech.* *In : Invertebrate Zoology. 3rd ed. New York : Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc. ; 1981:420-426.*
- 4) Lent CM : *Serotonergic modulation of the feeding behavior of the medicinal leech.* *Brain Res Bull.*

- 1985;14:643-655.
- 5) Pereira J : *Sanguisa, bloodsucking leeches*. In : Carson J, ed. *The Elements of Materia Medica and Therapeutics*. 3rd American ed, V2. Philadelphia : Blanchard and Lea ; 1854:1106-1118.
 - 6) Stille' A, Maisch JM : *Hirudo*. In : *The National Dispensary*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia : Henry C. Lea's son & Co.;1884:766-768.
 - 7) Morrison WA, O'Brien BM and McLeod AM : *Evaluation of digital replantation - A Review of 100 cases*. *Orthop. Clin. N. AM*. 8:295-308, 1977.
 - 8) Haycraft JB : *On the action of secretion obtained from the medicinal leech on the coagulation of the blood*. *Proc R Soc Lond*. 1884;36:478-487.
 - 9) Harvey RP, Degryse E, Stefani L, et al. : *Cloning and expression of a cDNA coding for the anticoagulant hirudin from the blood sucking leech, Hirudo medicinalis*. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*. 1986;83:1084-1088.
 - 10) Markwardt F : *Pharmacology of hirudin : One hundred years after the first report of the anticoagulant agent in medicinal leeches*. *Biomed Biochim Acta*. 1985;44:1007-1113.
 - 11) Linker A, Meyer K, Hoffman P : *The production of hyaluronate oligosaccharides by leech hyaluronidase and alkali*. *J Biol Chem*. 1960;238:1877-1879.
 - 12) Fritz H, Gebhart M, Meister R, Fink E : *Trypsin-plasmin inhibitors from leeches isolation, amino acid composition, inhibitory characteristics*. In : Fritz H, Tschesche H, eds. *Proceedings of the International Research Conference on proteinase inhibitors*. Munich, November 4 to 6, 1970. Berlin : Walter de Gruyter ; 1971;1:271-280.
 - 13) Sawyer RT : *Feeding and digestive system*. In : *Leech Biology and Behavior*. V2. Oxford : Clarendon press ; 1986;467-518.
 - 14) Busing KH, Doll W, Freytag K : *Die Bakterien, flore der medizinischen Blutegel*. *Arch Microbiol*. 1953;19:52-86.
 - 15) Whitlock MR, O'Hare PM, Sanders R, Morrow NC : *The medicinal leech and its use in plastic surgery : a possible cause for infection*. *Br J Plast Surg*. 1983;36:240-244.
 - 16) Von Graevenitz, A : 1985: *Aeromonas and pleisiomonas*, P. 278-281. In E. H. Lennette, Balows, W. J. Hausler, Jr., and H. J. Shadomy(ed.), *Manual of clinical microbiology*, 4th ed. American society for Microbiology Washington, D.C.
 - 17) Upton J : *Hirudo medicinalis : A tenacious clinical tool*. *British Association of Leech Scientist, Leech Newsletter No. 1, Nov., 1986*.