

8

ECM (EXTRACELLULAR MATRIX) PRODUCTS, AN ALTERNATIVE TO SPLIT SKIN GRAFTING?

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Aim: Extracellular matrix (ECM) products can be used in the final phase of wound healing. It promotes epithelialization, by which wound closure can be achieved. It can be used easily in the home care setting. Split skin grafting is a procedure that usually needs admission and operation, with subsequent morbidity and even mortality.

Methods: 15 patients with wounds suited for split skin grafting were treated with Oasis because of contra-indications for surgery (e.g. high anaesthesia risks or bacterial colonized wounds, which we treat with antibiotics prior to performing surgery). If the treatment would fail, they would be treated with a split skin graft after all.

Results: 14/15 wounds healed without the need for split skin grafting. Two minor complications were reported: 1) Hypergranulation tissue (5 pts), which didn't influence outcome negatively. 2) Infection (3 pts). One patient was treated with a split skin graft, one with antibiotics (ECM applications were discontinued) and one patient had an infection of another part of the leg. In this patient treatment with ECM was successfully continued.

Discussion: ECM products seem a promising treatment strategy in patients in whom split skin grafting could lead to morbidity and even mortality.