Stopping Surgical Drapes From Slipping During Pinnaplasty Using Steri-strips

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Every surgeon over time develops a preferred method of surgical draping when operating on the head and neck region. Securing the head towel with a towel clip or adhesive tape, for example, is important because slippage of these drapes creates an unsterile operating field [4]. Unfortunately, this seems to occur often during pinnaplasty despite the various observed techniques of draping.

Draping of the head is made slightly more awkward if single-use synthetic disposable drapes are applied, which seem firmer than traditional linen and thus more difficult to fold easily around the head. Use of adhesive strips to secure the head drape is not without its risks including allergic reactions, loss of skin or hair at removal of the drape, venous obstruction, tension pneumothorax, and premature inadvertent extubation of a patient [1–3].

Other reasons why the head towel may slip during pinnaplasty include the shape of the patients’ skull, less circumference of the skull covered by the drapes because of ears left exposed, rotational movement of the head within the drapes as the head is turned from side to side during the procedure, inability to apply sufficient tension for the drapes of patients whose procedure is performed while they are under local anesthesia.

A solution to this problem of slipping head towels is to use three strategically placed ½-in. Steri-strips (3M Healthcare, Germany) once the patient has been draped in the standard manner: one over the central forehead and one above each eyebrow (Fig. 1). I have found this simple technique helps to create a cheap and effective additional method of securing the head towel. It maintains the integrity of the surgical field and allows the surgeon to rotate the head freely from side to side during the procedure.
References