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WOUND CARE USING CULTURED KERATINOCYTES: PERSPECTIVE IN TROPICAL HEALTH

Objectives: leprosy patients may present chronic ulcers in lower limbs as a result of anaesthetic areas which can undergo trauma, burning and/or become infected. This chronic ulcers decreasing patient's quality of life and prevents patients from developing their professional activities. Therefore, this study aimed at treating lower limbs ulcers using autologous keratinocytes implantation, in association with fibrin glue, to accelerate the healing process. **Patients and Methods:** twelve leprosy patients with ulcers in lower limbs took part of this study; seven had only one ulcer, two had multiple ulcers and three had ulcers in both lower limbs, totalizing 24 ulcers. Healthy skin fragments were collected and submitted to enzymatic digestion to obtain individualized skin cells. These were cultivated for 4 weeks at 37°C and 5% CO₂ in medium specific for keratinocytes. The keratinocytes grown in culture were implanted on ulcer associated with fibrin glue

(Beriplast® P). After implant, the ulcers were covered with non-adherent dressing (Adaptic®) and Flexi-dress® (Unna boot). Ulcers were measured and photographed weekly for 2 months. **Results:** ulcers whose measures were smaller or equal to 10,0 cm length x 5,0 cm width (total of 17 ulcers) presented 72% of reduction in size, eight of them healed completely; the ulcers with higher measurements reduced 52% in size, two of them healed completely. **Conclusions:** the autologous keratinocyte implant associated with fibrin glue showed to be efficient in healing and/or reducing the size of ulcers, besides, it constitutes one additional treatment option for lower limbs ulcers, with possibility of being used in ulcer resulting from other diseases.

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