

Punch Biopsy Extraction With Fingers

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Punch biopsies are commonly used in dermatology for diagnosing skin diseases. Traditional methods involve the use of forceps, skin hooks, and scissors, which add to health care costs. The technique described here offers a cost-effective and efficient alternative for obtaining specimens.

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Practice Gap

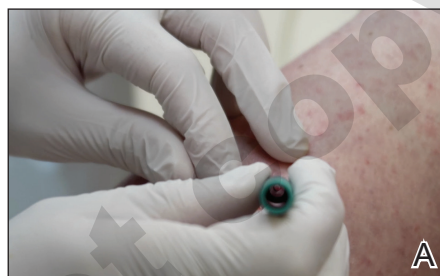
Punch biopsies are utilized frequently by dermatologists to aid in the diagnosis of various skin diseases.¹ When performing a punch biopsy, dermatologists are taught to use either forceps or skin hooks in addition to scissors to extract the tissue from the skin.² However, the use of these sterile instruments for a simple biopsy adds extra costs to the procedure. Herein, a cheaper and often faster method of obtaining the specimen from the patient is described.

The Technique

A 3- or 4-mm disposable punch biopsy tool is employed for this method. After locally anesthetizing the skin, the skin is punched to a subcutaneous depth utilizing the full length of the blade and a little extra pressure is applied downward while stretching the skin around (Figure, A). This may be helpful to dislodge the punch specimen from the surrounding skin. The specimen now can be easily removed by gently grasping it with the thumb and index finger (Figure, B and C). It then can be transferred immediately to the formalin container.

Practice Implications

This technique saves time as well as financial and environmental costs associated with the use of sterile instruments. An additional advantage to this simple method is avoiding specimen crush injuries, which are common when using forceps. This solution works in most cases but may not be suitable for certain special anatomic locations such as the scalp, nose, and ears.



A, Using this technique, extra downward pressure is applied while the skin is stretched during the punch biopsy. B, The specimen is grasped with the thumb and index finger. C, The removed specimen can then be transferred to a formalin container.

REFERENCES

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