

Treatment of deliberate self-harm scars in a Wound and Scars
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Purpose: The number of patients with deliberate self-harm scars has increased recently. These scars are difficult to hide and therefore of concern to the patients. Such patients often cannot obtain satisfactory treatment. At our clinic, self-harm scars are treated with fractional LASER, scar excision, dermabrasion, or 90-degree rotated and return split-thickness skin grafts. We report here our experiences and the results of a questionnaire given to patients who underwent any surgery for self-harm scars.

Patients and Methods: Consecutive patients who underwent surgery for self-harm scars at our clinic were identified prospectively. To determine whether the concerns of the patients had been alleviated by the surgery, the patients were surveyed after surgery with a questionnaire based on the Patient and Observer Scar Assessment Scale.

Results: Of the 140 patients (89% female; average age 32 years), 39, 16, and 85 underwent scar excision, dermabrasion, and skin grafting, respectively. Many patients were satisfied with the results. In particular, because the skin grafts could be successfully camouflaged and converted to an acceptable appearance similar to a burn scar, this surgery associated with a great reduction in patient concern about their appearance.

Conclusion: Various treatments are available for deliberate self-harm scars but in our experience, patients who received 90-degree rotated and return split-thickness skin grafts were particularly pleased with the results.