



**SMSNA**

Sexual Medicine Society of North America, Inc.

## **Razors and Preoperative Preparation of the Male Genitalia**

The Sexual Medicine Society of North America (SMSNA), a specialty society of the American Urological Association, supports in general the recent nationwide initiative to reduce peri-operative infections by the use of clippers rather than razors for preoperative hair removal. However, the delicate, irregular, and elastic skin of the male genitalia is ill-suited for clippers, which tend to produce multiple skin breaks, in contrast with razors, which have been used with good success for decades. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the SMSNA recommends that surgeons be permitted their choice of razors or clippers for preoperative preparation of the male genitalia.



## Preoperative hair removal on the male genitalia: clippers vs. razors

Grober ED, Domes T, Fanipour M, Copp JE. *Preoperative hair removal on the male genitalia: clippers vs. razors*. J Sex Med. 2013 Feb;10(2):589-94. doi: 10.1111/j.1743-6109.2012.02904.x. Epub 2012 Aug 21. PMID: 22908852.

### Abstract

**Introduction:** In an effort to reduce the incidence of postoperative surgical site infections (SSIs), many hospitals have adopted a strict practice of preoperative hair removal using clippers, as opposed to razors. However, the skin of the male genitalia is delicate, elastic with irregular skin folds and may be ill-suited for clippers.

**Aim:** To compare shave quality and the degree of skin trauma using two methods of preoperative hair removal on the scrotal skin: clippers vs. razors.

**Methods:** Patients undergoing surgery involving the male genitalia requiring preoperative hair removal were randomized to hair removal using clippers or a razor. Immediately following hair removal, a standardized digital photograph was taken of the male genitalia. All digital photos were evaluated in a blinded fashion by groups of urologic surgeons and surgical nurses using a standardized five-point global rating scale. The incidence of SSIs was monitored.

Main outcome measures: Primary outcomes included blinded global ratings of (i) the completeness of the preoperative hair removal within the surgical field and (ii) degree of skin trauma following hair removal. The incidence of SSIs within 3 months of surgery was monitored throughout the study period.

**Results:** Two hundred fifteen consecutive patients were randomized (107 clipper, 108 razor). Overall, preoperative hair removal on the male genitalia using a razor resulted in significantly less skin trauma ( $P = 2.5E-10$ ) and a more complete hair removal within the surgical field ( $P = 0.017$ ) compared with clippers. SSIs were identified in four patients during follow-up (1.8%—two using clippers; two, razors).

**Conclusions:** Our data suggest that preoperative hair removal on the scrotal skin using a razor results in less skin trauma and improved overall shave quality with no apparent increased risk of SSIs. Based on these findings, surgeons should be permitted their choice of razors or clippers for preoperative preparation of the male genitalia.

© 2012 International Society for Sexual Medicine.