

Introduction to "Propeller Flaps".

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Guest Editors: Geoffrey G. Hallock, MD, Marco Pignatti, MD

Introduction to “Propeller Flaps”

Marco Pignatti, MD and Geoffrey G. Hallock, MD

Abstract

The editors of this issue of Seminars in Plastic Surgery dedicated to propeller flaps met in 2009 at the “1st Tokyo Meeting on Perforator and Propeller Flaps.” On that occasion, as part of the advisory panel of the meeting, they contributed to the definition and classification of these flaps. Since then, several evolutions and new applications of propeller flaps appeared in the literature. In 2019, the editors met again in Bologna, Italy, where they decided to collect the experiences from prominent authors in propeller flap surgery and provide them to the readers in this monographic dedicated publication.

Keywords: history of propeller flaps, monographic issue, propeller definition, propeller classification

Just a decade ago, the editors of this special issue on “Propeller Flaps” met for the first time in of all places on the other side of the world at the “1st Tokyo Meeting on Perforator and Propeller Flaps” (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1

The authors at the 1st Tokyo Meeting on Perforator and Propeller Flaps in 2009.

We still believe that Rei Ogawa was the energy behind this extraordinary meeting and even more extraordinary nightlife in that megalopolis, having the strong support of that supermicrosurgeon icon Isao Koshima, and, as they would say in Italy, the “godfather” of propeller flaps himself, Hikko Hyakusoku. The junior editor (M. P.) virtually took it upon himself to cajole and coerce the core invited faculty to join together to better define this concept with a classification schema that was finally published in 2011 and is known now as the “Tokyo Consensus on Propeller Flaps”.¹

The world moved on but must have been watching us. It was destiny that the two of us would meet once again at the biennial meeting of the World Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery this past year in Bologna, Italy (Fig. 2). Again, the junior and still younger editor proposed updating what had happened during that mere leap second in the realm of the propeller flap. What better way to begin than to hear the inside story of how it all begun by our historian Hyakusoku. Our original pioneers Ogawa, Mateev, Georgescu, Balakrishman, Ono, Cubison, D'Arpa, Koshima, and Hyakusoku have once again come together to give “Our Definition of Propeller Flaps and Their Classification.”



Fig. 2

The authors at the World Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery in 2019.

Most of us are proud to be plastic *and* reconstructive surgeons and know that the anatomical limits of our specialty are restrained, according to that old cliché, to the “skin and its contents” and no more. And the same has proven to be true if but to witness the incredible versatility of the propeller flap now possible from “head to toe,” as documented here by an amazing cornucopia of authors from all regions of this earth, from Cordova et al the face, Ogawa the anterior trunk, its mirror image the posterior trunk by Kedar et al, Malzone and Innocenti the arm and forearm, Tos et al the hand, and Ellabban et al the lower extremity.

As we strive to always advance, our objective must be to even better satisfy the challenges of the given recipient site as well as to minimize any donor-site morbidity. Ten years ago, technology in perforator identification was in its infancy, and Ono shows us now his new “gold standard” for “perforator computed tomographic angiography.” This should allow us to not just be able to more precisely design and harvest a propeller flap, as Pignatti et al do

routinely, but also to be able to succinctly share solutions to minimize complications, as Cajozzo et al propose. What we do today, just like a decade ago, will not be what we do tomorrow. But it is what we here do today that hopefully will make us think, question, discuss, innovate, revise, struggle, improve, and, in the end, succeed!

Footnotes

Conflict of Interest None declared.

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Propeller Flaps

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