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Applied basic science of the auricular cartilage

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In this chapter practical aspects of the applied basic surgical science of the auricular cartilage will be discussed on an evidence based level according to the most recent researches in the literature.

Ear pinna (auricle) is an extremely important organ not only for the facial aesthesis, but also it plays a major role in hearing physiology. Both functions rely primarily on the cartilage of the auricle. Degrees of inclination and angles at its attachment to the skull determine the shape of the head and the auditory function especially the ability to localize direction of sound. Such position of the auricle is primarily due to the biomechanical nature of the cartilage which is the direct result of its biochemical composition.

In addition auricular cartilage is vulnerable to many congenital and acquired diseases that require cartilage replacement or excision; this has opened the door for many advances in tissue engineering to happen. In addition healthy cartilage of the auricle is a source of plentiful cartilage for reconstruction of the nose, skull base and facial defects.

Consequently, comprehensive knowledge about recent advances in literature about basic science of this critical piece of cartilage is of paramount importance. In the following chapter précised, focused and between lines pieces of information will be mentioned, but old and repeated ones will not be mentioned. This chapter is to know how basic physiology, pathology, biomechanics and biochemists of the auricular cartilage can be applied to the clinical prospective. It is not a pure clinical chapter; only related points that can be applied to the clinical practice will be discussed.

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