TOPICAL HEMOSTATS, GLUES AND LASERS IN NEUROSURGERY
Hemostasis in neurosurgery

- One of the most important aspects of surgery.
- Control of bleeding without ligature
- Unlike in abdominal and other surgeries ligatures and packs rarely useful.
- Many hours lost in bleeding control
Topical hemostats

- Agents that help in controlling bleeding.
- Ideal topical hemostat:
  - efficacious
  - minimal or no side effects
  - affordable
  - available
Sources of bleeding

- Scalp/muscles
- Bone
- Dura and sinuses
- Brain: capillary/venous/arterial.
Topical hemostats

• **Chemical**
  - Microfibrillar collagen
  - Thrombin
  - Fibrin glue
  - Hydrogen peroxide (3%)

• **Mechanical**
  - Surgicel
  - Oxycel
  - Gelfoam
  - Surgicel Fibrillar
  - Bone wax
  - Cottonoids
Surgicel

- Surgicel (Ethicon) is an oxidized cellulose polymer (the functional unit is poly anhydroglucuronic acid) formed by dissolving pure $\alpha$-cellulose (plant derived) in an alkaline solution.
- Introduced in 1940s.
- It is then regenerated into continuous fiber, knitted into gauze, and oxidized.
- Applied dry, absorbs within 4 to 8 weeks.
- Forms a brownish or black gelatinous mass in contact with blood.
• Oxycel (Becton Dickinson) is another oxidized cellulose polymer product that is similar.

• Surgicel is composed of solid fibers with irregular contours on cross-section, whereas Oxycel is composed of hollow “twisted tubule” fibers.
Surgicel

- Acts as a physical matrix to which platelets can adhere which, in turn, aids in clot formation.
- Additional pressure of the mass also contributes to the haemostatic process.
- Relatively bacteriostatic because of its relatively low pH, it deactivates and denatures some of the bacterial proteins thus making them more susceptible to antibiotics.
- Needs to be applied dry.
Gelatin sponge (Gelfoam/surgifoam)

- Introduced in the 1940s for neurosurgical procedures.
- Derived from purified pork skin gelatin.
- Absorbs approximately 45 times its weight in blood and can expand to approximately 200% of its initial volume.
- Can be used dry or saline soaked.
- Absorbed in approximately four to six weeks.
SURGICEL Fibrillar

- oxidized regenerated cellulose (1969)
- Layers can be peeled off in desired amounts.
- conforms to irregular surfaces, even hard-to-reach areas
- surgical visualisation is improved by ability to cauterise directly through it
- fully absorbed within 14 days
Microfibrillar collagen (Avitene)

- Collagen which is derived from bovine skin. binds tightly to blood surfaces.
- Causes minimal swelling especially when compared to Gelfoam.
- In addition to being collagen and causing contact activation, it does somehow directly activate platelets with subsequent aggregation.
- May reduce the number of free platelets in normal individuals.
- Loses effectiveness in thrombocytopenia (<10,000).
- It is absorbed in 3 months and needs to be applied dry.
Thrombin (thrombostat/thrombinar)

- Thrombin directly activates fibrinogen and converts it into fibrin monomers.
- Can be used directly or combined with gelatin sponge.
- Produced from bovine prothrombin hence antigenic.
- If injected into large vessels can lead to thrombosis and complications.
Complications

- Nidus of infection
- Inflammatory reaction (esp. avitene)
- Antigenicity (animal products)
- Mass effect (esp. gelatin)
- Gossipiboma
Bone wax

- Pioneered by Sir Victor Horsley (1892).
  - Horsley’s wax: **bees wax**, 7 parts; **almond oil**, 1 part; **salicylic acid**, 1 part.

- Modern wax: 88% refined beeswax and 12% isopropyl palmitate (softening agent)

- Effective in controlling bleeding from bone

- Once smeared across the bleeding edge, immediate hemostasis occurs.
Complications

1) Bone wax inhibits osteogenesis

2) Increases infection rates (the number of bacteria needed to produce osteomyelitis is reduced by a factor of $10^4$ (10,000))

3) Remains as a foreign body for many years
Ostene

- Sterile mixture of water-soluble alkylene oxide copolymers.
- Inert artificial material feels and works like wax.
- Does not increase infection rates, does not interfere with bone healing, and is non-inflammatory.
Fibrin glue (Tisseel/crosseal)

- Commercially available/autologous.
- 2 components:
  a) fibrinogen, factor 13, fibronectin, aprotinin, plasminogen, cryoprecipitate
  b) thrombin and calcium
- After mixing, fibrinogen is converted to fibrin
- Aprotinin inhibits premature fibrin degradation
Uses

- For hemostasis and tissue sealing
- To establish hemostasis
- To reinforce dural closure and prevent CSF leak.
- In anastomosis of nerves and nerve grafts
- Fixation of bone fragments to repair skull defects.
Lasers in Neurosurgery

- LASER (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation)
- Precise means of incision and coagulation of biological tissues.
- Each Laser medium has specific wavelengths and hence different absorption, penetration and scatter.
- Carbon dioxide (10.6 micrometre), Argon (4888 nm), Nd:YAG (1060 nm)
Uses

- Removal of extra axial tumors in sensitive areas.
- Neuroablative procedures (cordotomy, myelotomy etc)
- Vascular neurosurgery.
- Laser discectomy.
Conclusion

- Proper surgical principle remains the key.

- Judicious use of haemostatic agents is advised.