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The Feasibility of Face Allotransplantation in Korea.

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In 2005, 1st face allotransplantation was done successfully. Since then, about 50 cases of face allotransplantations were performed up until now. However, there are no case of face allotransplantation in Korea yet. There are some reasons why the face transplantaion was not done in Korea. Firstly, the legal issue would be the reason. The face is not categorized as an organ yet in Korea. Therefore, the face allotransplantation is still illegal. Although the numerous disscussion with the government, it was not acknowleged as the legal procedure. Secondly, the Asian culture where the traditional belief that the face should be preserved in oriental heritage might hinder the donation of the face tissue. Thus, the donor procurement is a challenging issue in many Asian countries. This would be the reason why the face transplantation was not done in many Asian countries in spite of the higher level of the surgical expertise. Lastly, the social awareness about the face allotransplantaion is very low compared to that in western countries. However, there are some patients who would be indicated for face allotransplantaion. Severe degree of neurofibromatosis, posttrauma and postburn patients could not be restored with the conventional reconstructive procedures. This lecture will address the feasibility of the face allotransplantaion including the current status and future perspectives.