

## Buyer Beware

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### Editorial

Very recently I spotted advertising from a Turkish hair transplant clinic offering F.U.E. (Follicular Unit Extraction) at incredibly low costs. They were offering £2000 for 20000 grafts!! - That's cheap!

They had also equated 2000 grafts to 4000 hairs, stating that 1 graft equalled 2 hairs?

Most people researching hair transplant surgery will know that grafts differ in hair content. Some are single hair grafts, some 2/3 hair grafts, 4/5, and (dependent on the patient's donor) even the occasional 6 hair grafts.

I kept staring at what they were offering, wondering how they were able to offer such low prices and why had they purposefully equated 2000 grafts to 4000 hair? Why would they stipulate 2 hair grafts like it was the norm?

Then the penny dropped! It was so obvious and was starting me on the face. THEY HAD DROPPED THE 'SELECTION' PROCESS!! It is one of the key features of the FUE technique.

The process that every surgeon and doctor worth their salt conducts when they and their assistants take the time to search for the grafts with the bigger numbers of hairs to ensure their patients achieve as much volume as is possible.

This Turkish clinic had stipulated 2 hairs per graft. They had advertised 2000 grafts = 4000 hairs like it was a 'positive' which to the uninitiated would seem like great value.

When in reality, without the 'Selection' process, 4000 hairs is about the lowest 'harvest' that one would expect from 2000 grafts.

When the F.U.E. Procedure first became an option, back in 2004, the I.S.H.R.S. (The International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery) gave the average content of the Follicular Unit as 2.1 hairs.

In those days the expected harvest was around 2100 hairs from 2000 grafts. However, in later years the figures quoted by the I.S.H.R.S. have jumped dramatically to as high as 2.6. Hair per F.U.E. grafts. A figure the Society attributed to the more experienced surgeon's.

Had the clinic in question retained the Selection process and had they had their patient's best interests at heart, they could have

increased their patient's 'harvest' from an estimated 4000 hairs to a potential 5200 hair.

Added to which, they would have saved their patients valuable 'donor grafts' for any future procedure they may need.

I've met a good many former patients who have run out of donor grafts, leaving body-hair grafts as their only alternative.

In fact I faced that very same problem recently when I had my own hair transplanted after losing my remaining 'natural' growth due to a recent illness.

My surgeon Dr. Tsounis was only able to locate 643 grafts to use to 'infill' lost hair from my recession areas, both sides of my front hairline. Not, I hasten to add as the result of poor practice but due to my having had multiple procedures over the years, leaving me with limited donor.

Had my surgeon removed any more grafts, he would have needed to utilize grafts in my donor area risking my displaying scarring from my past 'plug' and strip surgery.

At risk of repeating me, this particular Turkish clinic had abolished one of the single most important benefits of F.U.E., the 'key' process of 'Selection'?

They had replaced this process with 'Ad Hoc' extraction, simply to save them time and their costs. They had simply plucked the grafts out of the scalp like plucking a Chicken! No records of hair content. No planned usage of bigger grafts for maximum volume? Nothing, just the minimum harvest of 4000 hairs!

No wonder they are offering such low prices!

The problem of course is the lack of knowledge the average prospective patient has about the intricacies involved with hair transplant procedures.

Maybe it's time for legitimate purveyors of F.U.E surgery to highlight such unacceptable donor extraction methods on their own websites?