REVIEW

The art and science of head nerve blocks in urgent care settings

Zoë M. Rushetsky[1*], Grace E. Lynch[1], Bhavik Singh[1], Ambika Jokhulall[1] and Donald Penney[1]

Abstract

The purpose of this review is to describe the role of regional scalp nerve blocks as an alternative to direct local infiltration for head and scalp laceration repair in emergency and urgent care settings, where tissue swelling from infiltration can obscure landmarks and complicate wound closure. Methods included a narrative review of published studies and procedural descriptions focusing on scalp sensory anatomy, nerve block techniques, anesthetic selection, and safety considerations, along with the development of simplified illustrations and surface-landmark images tailored to outpatient clinicians. Results demonstrate that regional scalp blocks reliably provide effective anesthesia with less tissue distortion and lower anesthetic volume than infiltration, yet existing resources are often highly technical or dispersed across subspecialty literature. The diagrams created for this review consolidate essential anatomic and procedural information into a format that is easier to reference during clinical care and illustrate how a small number of targeted injections can anesthetize common laceration patterns involving the forehead, temporal region, and occiput. The conclusion is that regional scalp nerve blocks are safe, efficient, and less frequently incorporated into routine emergency practice for selected head and scalp injuries, and that combining current evidence with practical visual guides may increase clinician confidence and adoption in urgent care environments.

Keywords Scalp nerve block, Regional anesthesia, Laceration repair, Head and neck injuries