

Image Gallery: Intravital visualization of the dynamic changes in human hair follicle cycling

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DEAR EDITOR, Macroscopically, the three well-known hair follicle (HF) stages (anagen, catagen and telogen) cannot be distinguished from each other in a watertight manner; as, the hair cycle involves dynamic, continuous morphological changes. Image (A) is a representative example of the changing morphology in the different stages of the hair cycle of native human terminal scalp HFs as seen under the stereomicroscope immediately after surgical harvesting. Image (B) shows the same HFs after staining with the vital dye methylene blue (0.02%) for 5 min, highlighting the distinct anatomical features of each hair cycle stage.¹ The regressing epithelial strand (arrows) in mid-to-late catagen HFs can now be clearly seen after methylene blue staining, and the telogen hair bulb with its club hair shaft becomes highlighted. Asterisks demarcate eccrine gland coils, which likely form an integral part of the pilosebaceous unit, at least in scalp skin.² (a) Anagen, (b) early catagen, (c–e) mid catagen, (f) late catagen, (g) telogen.

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