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Biography

Michelle Kaminski, is a third-year medical student at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. She completed her MPH at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and BA in Health Sciences at Gettysburg College, graduating with honors. She is an aspiring dermatologist.

Dermatologic Implications of the Russian Manicure Trend

Abstract:

“Russian manicure,” an e-file-assisted dry manicure involving cuticle and proximal nail fold manipulation with gel placement adjacent to the eponychium, has gained popularity through social media aesthetics. Because the cuticle and proximal nail fold serve as critical barriers against microbial ingress and irritant or allergen penetration, repeated disruption may lead to inflammatory, infectious, and dystrophic complications.

A structured narrative review of PubMed, Google Scholar, and dermatology society guidance documents was conducted using terms including “Russian manicure,” “e-file manicure,” “cuticle removal,” “paronychia,” “onycholysis,” and “acrylate allergic contact dermatitis.” Clinical studies, case series, outbreak investigations, and patch-testing reports were prioritized, with emphasis on mechanisms of injury, microbiologic profiles, sensitizers, and preventive counseling.

Four complication domains consistently emerged. First, barrier disruption from cuticle removal and proximal fold trauma increases susceptibility to acute bacterial paronychia and chronic periungual inflammation. Second, mechanical injury from repeated e-file abrasion may cause irritant dermatitis, microfissuring, onychoschizia, onycholysis, and nail dystrophy, with risk influenced by technician technique, bit selection, pressure, and frictional heat. Third, methacrylate-containing gel and acrylic systems are associated with allergic contact dermatitis, periungual eczema, and onychodystrophy, with additional occupational risk among nail technicians. Finally, inadequate instrument sterilization and contaminated tools contribute to salon-associated infections.

Russian manicure represents a periungual barrier-injury cascade driven by cumulative trauma and sensitizer exposure. Dermatologic counseling should emphasize barrier preservation, early recognition of paronychia and dermatitis, nail-rest intervals, and strict salon hygiene to reduce preventable morbidity.