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In vivo and in vitro cellular ingrowth into a new generation of artificial ligaments.

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Artificial ligaments are a useful tool in ligament reconstruction. Although the new generation of artificial ligaments shows encouraging clinical results, in contrast to earlier generations studies on the biological properties are lacking. Biopsies were taken from a ligament advancement reinforcement system (LARS) 6 months after implantation and investigated by histochemistry. An in vitro study seeding human fibroblasts or osteoblast-like cells (up to 10(6) cells for 21 days) on ligament pieces (5 x 5 mm) was conducted and analyzed by histochemistry. The biopsies showed complete cellular and connective tissue ingrowth in the LARS ligament. In vitro fibroblasts and osteoblast-like cells encapsulated the fibers by building a cellular net around them. To our knowledge, these findings demonstrate for the first time the cellular ingrowth into the LARS ligament. This mechanism might explain the strength and the inert behavior of the ligament without the synthetic part shown in clinical studies. Copyright 2004 S. Karger AG, Basel

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