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THE GUIDE FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL AESTHETICS

October 2023
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CARL THORNFELDT, M.D.,
On Becoming the Father of Skin Barrier Repair

COMPARING TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR FUNGAL ACNE

PLUS:
- Medical Weight Loss: Magic or Not?
- Energy-Based Treatments for Acne

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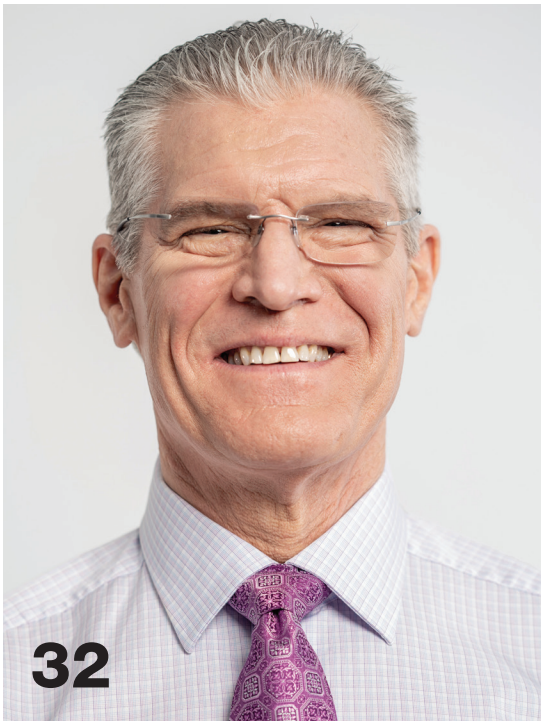

Carl Thornfeldt, M.D., Photos courtesy of Episciences, Inc.





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Rebecca Lane

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An All-Out Attack on Acne

As someone who dealt with acne as a teenager and still do as an adult, I have a particularly special place in my heart for skin care that takes attacking acne as seriously as I do. This is a war and I need to know my soldiers are up to the task of launching a full-scale attack against a foe of this calibur, one that covers every angle and possible weak spot they could use to their advantage. I would bet most patients feel the same way when it comes to this relentless enemy. In my interview with Dr. Carl Thornfeldt (pg. 32), he discusses his own significant struggles with chronic skin conditions and the toll they took on him during childhood, as well as his determination to help his own patients avoid the same negative experience. Whether it's mild acne or something much worse, a solid plan of attack requires an arsenal of weapons designed to approach the problem from more than one angle. I have curated such an arsenal below. Here's my version of an "All-Out Attack on Acne" essentials pack every skin warrior should carry into battle.



SkinCeuticals Acne Skin System is a simple, three step regimen specifically formulated to treat adult acne, and proven to reduce sebum and the appearance of fine lines. As an adult who deals with acne, I appreciate products that make that differentiation. As such, it not only treats adult acne, the trio works synergistically to repair the visible damage caused by blemishes and aging. The LHA Cleansing Gel, containing LHA, glycolic acid and salicylic acid, unclogs pores, smooths rough skin and brightens complexion. The LHA Toner gently exfoliates, removing any excess residue and dead cells to decongest pores. Lastly, the Blemish + Age Defense oil-free serum is targeted to prevent new acne from forming, reduce blotchiness and improve fine lines and wrinkles.
skinceuticals.com



Epionce Purifying Spot Gel is a spot treatment formulated to specifically target acne lesions. In addition to a good acne skin care regimen, having a spot treatment in your arsenal is another essential tool for any good acne kit. This impressive gel reduces redness and blemish size in record time, while also killing bacteria and yeast linked to acne. A clinical study cited by Epionce showed that in one day of use, Purifying Spot Gel reduced redness by 81.8%, elevation of acne lesions by 72.7% and the diameter by 36.4%, outperforming the competing prescription product.
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Circadia Charcoal Milk Clarifying Mask & Activator Set is a potent mask to complete the perfect acne attack kit that detoxifies and exfoliates skin while specifically targeting acne congestion. The mask detoxifies the skin, relieving acne congestion, and prevents future acne using bamboo charcoal and kaolin clay. Bamboo charcoal helps remove toxins while also reducing bacteria in the skin, and kaolin clay absorbs excess sebum and draws out impurities to prevent pore clogging without irritating skin. Lactobionic acid provides gentle exfoliation for compromised skin, as well as hydration and protection against free radicals, while lactic acid exfoliates, hydrates and brightens. To complete this powerful blend, olive squalene decreases TEWL and enhances the skin barrier to heal skin.
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A Global Networking Event Filled with Educational Workshops

Step into the spotlight at Empire Medical Training's 25th Anniversary Celebration weekend, spanning December 8–11. Join us for an entire retreat dedicated to the science and art of medical aesthetics, highlighted by the **"Aesthetics Celebrity Summit"** on December 9th. This flagship event is guided by the **foremost key opinion leaders** in the field of aesthetics—**Stephen Cosentino, Chris Croley, Shino Bay Aguilera, Sheila Barbarino, Sebastian Cotofana, Azza Halim, Ramtin Kassir, Lyris Verdura-Dominic** and others creating significant ripples within our industry.

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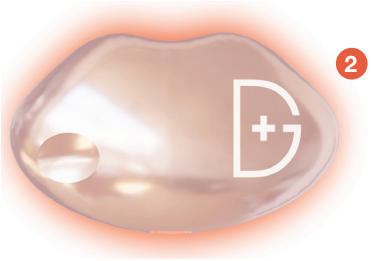



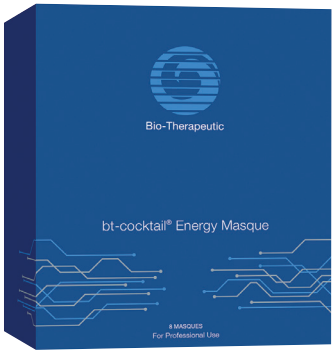



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2 DRX SPECTRALITE LIPWARE PRO

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4 ATP ENERGY MASQUE

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Contact: 800.976.2544, bio-therapeutic.com

5 SILKSCREEN SPF 50

Agency by Curology SilkScreen SPF 50 provides UV protection and is available in light-medium and medium-deep tints to offset mineral sunscreen whitecast, blur imperfections and even out redness and skin tone.

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MMP Capital Keeps Skincredible Dermatology & Surgery on the Cutting Edge of Cosmetics

Dr. Bobby Awadalla knew the time was right four years ago. As a double board-certified dermatologist with years of experience, he was ready to establish his own dermatology practice at Skincredible Dermatology & Surgery, in Mission Viejo, Calif., and felt ready to capitalize on the strong market demand for cosmetics.

Expanding into a new market is a great opportunity to build revenue, but it does come with financial challenges. Dr. Awadalla had to buy a full suite of new cosmetic equipment to be able to offer the procedures customers wanted. He started shopping around for a lending partner and soon discovered that all lenders are not created equal.

“My past experience in trying to obtain a loan was difficult. It felt like sleezy sales guys trying to trap you into a loan with terrible terms that you were stuck in for three years or more,” said Dr. Awadalla. “Then I found MMP Capital. They are able to get things done quickly and efficiently, and I never felt like I was being sold. They are genuinely good guys trying to make a difference for small business owners like me.”

“Since I founded MMP Capital ten years ago, we have become the gold standard for medical aesthetic lending in the United States,” said John-Paul Smolenski, Founder and CEO. “As a specialty lender, we understand how new devices will impact a medical practice by opening up new markets and new revenue streams. As such, we can write loans that are approved within hours with industry-leading terms and most importantly a dedicated focus on customer service that treats customers with respect and transparency.”

Through MMP Capital, Dr. Awadalla has financed two devices and secured additional lines of capital, allowing his practice to offer a full breadth of cosmetics including Botox, fillers, lasers/resurfacing, non-surgical face lifts, and body contouring devices. He also recently opened the doors to a new glamourous cosmetic suite to offer a calm and comfortable spa-like setting for customers.

“I am proud to say that Skincredible Dermatology & Surgery is one of the first 50 dermatology practices in the country with a device that provides amazing results with non-surgical face lifts. My patients are experiencing vast improvement in their lower face/jowl area,” said Dr. Awadalla.

“Being able to finance the purchase of this device has made a huge difference for my cosmetic practice. People come from all over to get this treatment, attracting new customers who continue to stay with us for years.”

For medical aesthetic practices, investing in the business is a necessity. Today’s customers know what they want and will find a doctor or practice that has it. Financing equipment with MMP Capital is a simple process that allows aesthetic practices to start making money with their new device quickly, while building a word-of-mouth reputation as a pioneer with the latest and greatest that the industry has to offer.

“One device can make all the difference. Dr. Awadalla realized the importance of being first to market with a unique service and grabbed the opportunity with both hands,” said Smolenski. “He has continued to work with us over the years to remain on the cutting edge of cosmetic dermatology, and I look forward to watching his success while he continually grows his business.”

“The MMP Capital team is an amazing group of people to work with,” said Dr. Awadalla. “I need to have the ability to expand quickly, and with MMP as a partner, I know I will always have financing in hand to offer a new service before any of my competitors.”





Industry Experts Discuss Digital Technology

We tapped our industry experts to see what digital trends they are currently seeing within the medical aesthetics industry, from AI and AR-driven tools to enhanced aesthetic devices.

"Two words: artificial intelligence. It's everywhere these days, and however you feel about it, there's no denying the possibilities for time- and money-strapped aesthetics practices. These technologies are incredible for their possibilities in making content creation easier for social media, chatbots and longer-form content like blog posts. Still, they don't remove the need for human oversight. Editing and double-checking everything you put your brand on is so important. Technology has come a long way, but nothing is perfect (yet). It's helpful to think of these tools as idea generators instead of outright content generators because they do still make mistakes. Remember, if the goal is to build trust, the human aspect of your marketing has to remain a part of what you do. People don't connect with robots, they connect with other people. AI might be able to take over and write everything for us someday, but it's certainly not there yet."

—Melissa Messer, content marketing manager at MyAdvice

"The number one rapidly exploding tech trend I see in the aesthetics industry is the involvement of artificial intelligence (AI) between the practice and the patient. The use of AI helps to set better expectations for treatment outcomes, improves the patient experience and helps educate patients about other procedures suitable for their unique needs in order for them to achieve the desired results. AI excels in creating personalized treatment plans, and helps foster patient-centric care."

—Izhak Musli, co-founder of Aesthetic Success

"Latest trends include AI-driven treatment planning, virtual consultations, AR simulations for visualizing results and the integration of EHRs for streamlined operations and data security. 3D printing is used for personalized implants, while social media marketing helps clinics connect with clients. Non-invasive/minimally invasive devices are safer and more effective."

—Jonathan Kanevsky, M.D., FRCSC, plastic and reconstructive surgeon at Aura Aesthica

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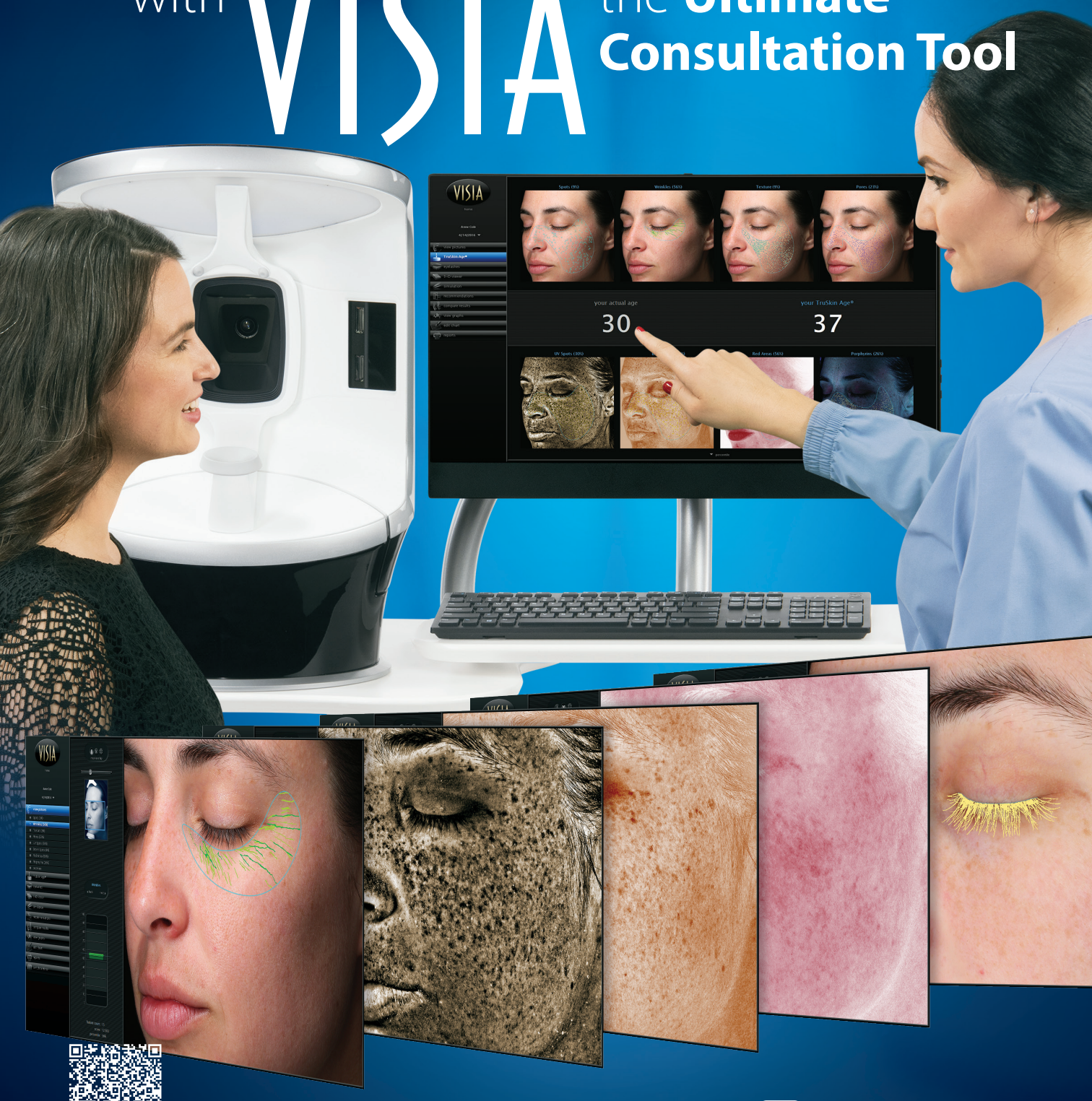

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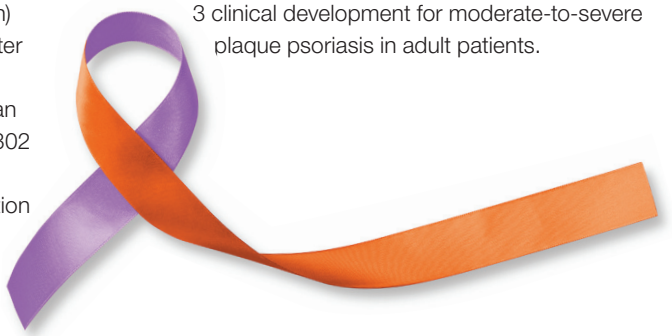
LATEST IN LITERATURE

National Psoriasis Awareness: Latest Treatment Innovations

According to the National Psoriasis Foundation, more than 125 million people worldwide (2-3% of the population) have psoriasis and an estimated 30% with psoriasis also develop psoriatic arthritis. Nearly 40% of patients with psoriatic arthritis reported their disease to be a large problem in everyday life. Psoriasis reportedly has a greater impact on the quality of life in women and younger patients. With the cause of psoriasis still unclear, studies and treatments continue to evolve for patients of all severity levels.

Soligenix: Soligenix has announced the expansion of its Phase 2a trial of SGX302 (synthetic hypericin) for the treatment of mild-to-moderate psoriasis after demonstration of biological effect in the initial five subjects. The study is expected to enroll at least an additional five subjects, exploring the use of SGX302 in the standard-of-care psoriasis setting, prior to undertaking the larger phase of the study. Evaluation of the initial five subjects enrolled demonstrated a clear biological signal, with the majority of patients recording an improvement in the PASI (psoriasis area and severity index) score.

Janssen Pharmaceutical: The Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson revealed positive topline results from its Phase 2b Frontier clinical trial evaluating the oral interleukin-23 receptor (IL-23R) antagonist peptide JNJ-2113 in adult patients with moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis. The trial achieved all primary and secondary efficacy endpoints. A greater proportion of patients who received JNJ-2113 achieved PASI 75 compared to placebo after 16 weeks. The report indicates that the results for JNJ-2113 demonstrated a profile that supports its advancement into Phase 3 clinical development for moderate-to-severe plaque psoriasis in adult patients.





Axillary Hyperhidrosis Global Market Experiencing Significant Growth

The global market for axillary hyperhidrosis (AHH) is experiencing significant growth and is projected to continue expanding through 2032, according to a report from Research and Markets. The United States holds the largest market size, reaching approximately $500 million in 2022.

Research on AHH has an opportunity for innovation, as it is often underdiagnosed and understudied as a disease, according to the report. Although there is currently no cure for AHH, various treatment options are available to manage the condition. Per the International Hyperhidrosis Society's Clinical Guidelines for the Treatment of Primary Focal Axillary Hyperhidrosis, the general recommendation is to try more conservative therapy before resorting to invasive treatment.

The market for AHH has seen the emergence of new therapies that have the potential to impact the market. One therapy identified in the report is ECCLOCK, developed by Botanix Pharmaceuticals. These innovative treatments are expected to drive the growth of the AHH market. QBREXZA (glycopyrronium) was approved by the U.S. FDA in 2018. Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare approved RAPIFORT Wipes 2.5% (glycopyrronium tosylate hydrate) to treat primary axillary hyperhidrosis.



Minimally Invasive Treatments Can Further Gender-Affirming Aesthetics

The LGBTQIA+ movement has come to represent acceptance, freedom and self-expression. Individuals of all genders are learning that there are non-surgical aesthetic treatments to help them look as feminine, masculine or androgynous as they prefer. These transformations are possible using injectable treatments, laser hair removal, and non-surgical body contouring. No matter their gender, there are options for them, and the medical aesthetics community is here to support and advance these initiatives.

Recent data from a Pew Research Center survey indicates a remarkable shift in the percentage of transgender individuals in the United States across generations. Among adults under 30, 5.1% identify as trans or nonbinary, with 2.0% identifying as trans men or trans women and 3.0% considering themselves nonbinary (neither strictly a man nor a woman). The percentage drops to 1.6% for adults aged 30 to 49 and further down to 0.3% for those over 50 years old.

One company at the forefront of gender-aligning treatments within medical aesthetics is Skinspirations. Cynthia Elliott, M.D., owner and primary practitioner of Skinspirations, recognizes the urgency for transgender individuals to reconcile the conflict between their inner truth and outward appearance. For transgender individuals, minimally invasive cosmetic treatments can go a long way toward relieving their gender dysphoria by creating better harmony between their physical and innermost selves. “The growing appeal and destigmatization of aesthetic medical treatments across all genders creates unique opportunities for clinicians to do their part in supporting transgender individuals on their lifelong journey of self-discovery and self-expression,” said Elliott

Mesotherapy & SKINVIVE (Profhilo) Injectables to Impact Skin Booster Global Market Projections

The global skin booster market is projected to be worth $2.3 billion by 2030, growing at a CAGR of 10.5%, according to market research published by Prescient & Strategic Intelligence. The increasing concerns about looks and wellbeing of the skin, growing per capita income and social acceptance of plastic surgery are a few key factors identified in the report. The growing market has also increased interest in skin-boosting injectables and procedures, including mesotherapy and profhilo injections.

In 2022, the female category dominated the skin-boosting market, and the report projects the trend to continue its dominance throughout the forecast period. According to P&S Intelligence, more than 90% of aesthetic procedures throughout the world are performed on women. North America had the largest market share, approximately 40% in 2022. The average disposable income in the United States is higher than in most countries, and skin issues impact more than 50 million people every year in the United States, according to the report.

Mesotherapy remains a popular method for boosting skin health, as well as microneedling, fillers and Botox and other aesthetic procedures. Profhilo, an emerging alternative to Botox, is currently only available in the United States under the label SKINVIVE by JUVÉDERM.

BUSINESS CONSULT BY TERRI ROSS



Improving Patient Retention with Loyalty Programs

A top to bottom guide to successfully utilizing loyalty programs.

As the owner or manager of a busy medical aesthetics practice, providing a top-notch patient experience and demonstrating genuine appreciation for your clients is vital. Patient loyalty plays a significant role in driving referrals, so it's crucial to express gratitude and reward their loyalty through effective loyalty programs.

Why Create a Loyalty Program?

Loyalty programs serve multiple purposes, one of which is boosting revenue through enhanced patient retention. By incentivizing patients to return and increasing their lifetime value, these programs can contribute to your long-term success. Satisfied patients are more likely to refer others, generating word-of-mouth referrals that benefit your practice.

Types of Loyalty Programs

Loyalty programs come in various forms, ranging from simple to more complex initiatives. Basic programs, such as punch cards for purchases and referral credits for patient recommendations, are easy to implement and can yield significant results.

Service-specific memberships represent another effective approach. For instance, if a patient has completed a package of BBL treatments, you can establish a one-year maintenance program for them, offering special pricing or savings as a reward for their loyalty.



Full-fledged membership packages are exceptional tools for boosting patient retention. By charging upfront fees on a monthly or annual basis, these packages provide discounts across multiple services, encouraging patients to explore additional treatments and procedures within your practice. Membership programs can be structured with various pricing tiers and discount levels to cater to diverse patient preferences.

You can also collaborate with vendor loyalty programs from reputable companies that can be highly advantageous. Leveraging these programs can add substantial value to your practice and benefit your patients.

When implementing loyalty programs, it's important to consider your practice's unique needs and clientele. I recommend starting simple with a few well-chosen initiatives, especially if you don't currently have any loyalty program in place.

Do's & Don'ts of Loyalty Programs

Before introducing memberships or loyalty programs, it's essential to have a clear understanding of your Revenue Per Hour and Profit Per Treatment for the services you offer. This knowledge will enable you to determine appropriate discounts without compromising your profit margin.

Focus on promoting recurring services that require maintenance treatments for optimal patient outcomes, as well as services with higher profit margins to ensure the viability of your loyalty programs.

Keeping the programs simple is crucial for their success. Avoid overly complicated structures, and if necessary, streamline and simplify the offerings.

Take advantage of vendor loyalty programs to enhance your practice's value proposition. Regular evaluation and re-evaluation of your programs helps identify what works best and what adjustments may be needed. I would also advise not to engage in price matching, as your programs already provide added value to your patients.

Transparency is key, especially when it comes to terms and conditions. Ensure that your patients fully understand the benefits and limitations of your loyalty programs. Clearly define how punch cards or other promotions can be used and applied, avoiding confusion.

While allowing for some flexibility in your terms and conditions, avoid overly specific statements that may lead to misunderstandings. Including a condition statement for membership programs, such as "Subject to change as our pricing, service lines or product lines may change over time," is a wise approach.

Financial Management & Program Preparation

Maintaining meticulous financial records is crucial, especially for membership programs that involve prepayments. Having a signed consent form and a clear process for enrollment and cancellation fees, as well as a well-communicated cancellation policy, are essential aspects of sound financial management.



Keep programs simple. Avoid overly complicated structures.



Before launching loyalty programs, ensure your team is well-prepared to handle the associated details. Develop processes for applying discounts, HIPAA compliant referral credit, patient enrollment, termination of enrollment, handling consents and card information, monthly fee processing and managing failed payments.

Empower your team with scripts and talking points to effectively communicate the value of your loyalty programs. Provide guidance on handling FAQs, objections and termination requests, ensuring they are well-equipped to respond to any situation.

Measuring Success & Avoiding Double Discounts

Setting realistic goals for your staff and practice is vital to gauge the success of your loyalty programs. Utilize a goal tracker to monitor and measure program effectiveness. Create a plan and timeline for the program's launch, and regularly train your staff to ensure they are well-prepared to manage the programs and provide valuable feedback.

To protect your profit margins, exercise caution in offering multiple discounts concurrently, as this may lead to double discounts that are financially detrimental to your bottom line.

Avoiding Discounted Gift Card Pitfalls

While gift cards can be valuable offerings, selling them at discounted rates can lead to profit erosion when combined with other promotions. As tracking such combinations can be challenging, I recommend you refrain from selling gift cards at discounted prices.



Avoid overlapping promotions and double discounts.

Vendor Loyalty Program Awareness

Familiarize yourself with the terms and conditions of vendor rewards programs to optimize the benefits they offer. Comprehending these programs ensures effective utilization without inadvertently doubling discounts.

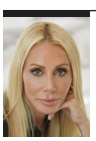
Promoting Your Loyalty Programs

To maximize the impact of your loyalty programs, ensure your staff is well-versed and enthusiastic about promoting them to all patients. Utilize branded materials, such as rack cards and brochures, and create banners to advertise major membership programs. Make sure your loyalty punch cards are branded and displayed prominently at the front desk.

Incorporate calls to action for loyalty programs in newsletters, feature program rollouts on your website and actively promote them on social media. When patients visit for treatments like neurotoxin or filler injections, inquire if they are members and enroll them in the program if they aren't already.

Conclusion

To recap, loyalty programs are important tools for enhancing patient retention in the field of aesthetic medicine. By following these guidelines, you can effectively implement and promote your loyalty programs, leading to improved patient satisfaction and long-term success for your practice. For any questions or further assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at hello@apxplatform.com. We are here to support your practice's growth and success. ME



Terri Ross is a world-renowned practice management expert, thought leader, and international speaker in the medical aesthetic industry. She founded APX Platform in 2021. In 2023 after only two years post-launch, APX merged with Engage Technologies Group to offer a complete practice performance system, encompassing practice optimization and patient engagement. Terri now serves as President of Aesthetics at Engage Technologies Group.

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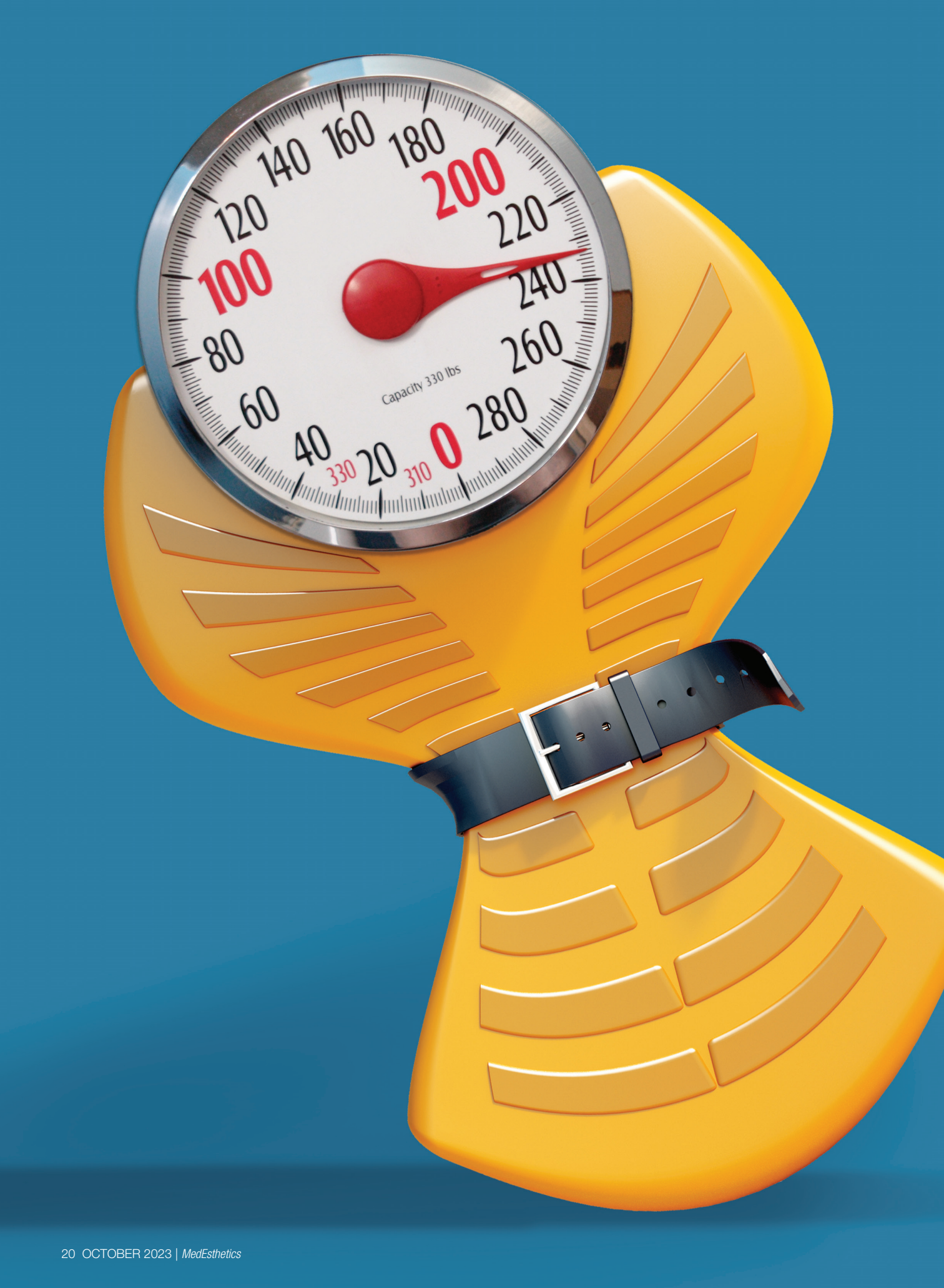
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MEDICAL WEIGHT LOSS: MAGIC OR NOT?

Considering medical weight loss options to determine the most effective approach for your patients.

By Cheryl Whitman

More than 40% of American adults today live with obesity; 60 years ago, that number was 13%. This shows that the obesity rate in the U.S. has tripled in the past six decades. Meanwhile, there have been over 450,000 obesity studies published, and last year the federal government spent $1.2 billion on obesity research. Yet obesity has not been reduced, and in fact, the annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S is $174 billion and rising. Obesity is a growing problem whose causes are poorly understood. However, there are some glimmers of hope on the horizon. Many medical practices are offering options to their overweight patients.

Medical Weight Loss Programs

Medical-based weight loss programs offered in medical spas typically combine medical expertise with various interventions to help individuals achieve their weight loss goals in a supervised and holistic manner. These programs are designed to address the underlying factors contributing to weight gain and provide personalized strategies for long-term weight management. Here are some common options found in medical spas:

Medical Consultation and Assessment: Medical weight loss programs begin with a comprehensive evaluation by a healthcare professional. They will review a patient's medical history, assess current health status and identify any underlying medical conditions or medications that may impact weight loss efforts. This information helps create a tailored weight loss plan.

Nutritional Counseling: Medical spas often offer nutrition counseling services provided by registered dietitians or nutritionists. These professionals will assess patients' dietary habits and create a customized meal plan that suits their individual needs and weight loss goals. They may educate patients about portion control, balanced nutrition and offer ongoing support to help them make healthy food choices.

Exercise and Fitness Guidance: Medical weight loss programs may include exercise recommendations or access to fitness professionals. They can help design an exercise regimen that suits individual patient fitness levels and preferences. Regular physical activity not only aids weight loss but also improves overall health, boosts metabolism and increases energy levels.

Medication Management: In some cases, medical weight loss programs may involve the use of prescription medications to assist with weight loss. These medications are typically used for individuals with obesity or certain medical conditions that make weight loss challenging. The prescribing physician closely monitors their use to ensure safety and effectiveness.

Behavioral Therapy: Addressing the psychological and emotional aspects of weight loss is crucial for long-term success. Medical spas may offer counseling or behavioral therapy sessions to help individuals develop healthier attitudes and habits towards food, manage stress, identify triggers for overeating and develop coping mechanisms.



Meal Replacements: Medical weight loss programs may incorporate meal replacements, such as protein shakes or bars, to provide convenient and portion-controlled options for certain meals. These can help individuals reduce caloric intake while ensuring adequate nutrition.

Support and Monitoring: Ongoing support and monitoring are essential components of medical weight loss programs. Regular check-ins with healthcare professionals help track progress, make necessary adjustments and provide motivation and accountability. This support system helps individuals stay on track and address any challenges encountered during the weight loss journey.

It's important to note that medical weight loss programs in medical spas should be conducted under the supervision of qualified healthcare professionals who can ensure patient safety and monitor their progress effectively. Initial consultations and assessments are vital to determine the most appropriate program for the specific needs and goals of each patient.

Prescription Medication for Weight Loss

Weight loss drugs such as Ozempic and Wegovy are prescription medications approved by regulatory authorities, such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), for the treatment of obesity or as an adjunct to lifestyle interventions for weight management. These medications can be used under the guidance and supervision of healthcare professionals who specialize in weight loss or obesity management. Here's an overview of two commonly prescribed weight loss drugs:

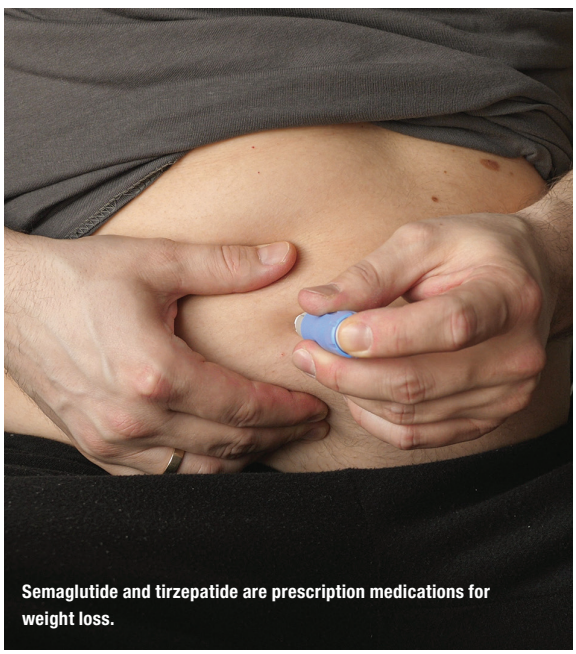
Ozempic (semaglutide): Originally approved for the treatment of type 2 diabetes, Ozempic has also been found to promote weight loss. It belongs to a class of drugs called glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists. Ozempic works by increasing feelings of fullness, reducing hunger and slowing down gastric emptying. It is usually administered as a once-weekly injection.

Wegovy (semaglutide): Wegovy is a higher-dose formulation of semaglutide, the same active ingredient found in Ozempic. It is specifically approved for chronic weight management in adults with a body mass index (BMI) of 27 kg/m^2 or greater, who also have at least one weight-related condition (such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, or dyslipidemia). Like Ozempic, Wegovy is also administered as a once-weekly injection.

Mounjaro (semaglutide): Mounjaro is also a formulation of semaglutide, but has an additional chemical in its formulation which imitates another hormone in the body that affects food cravings.

Both Ozempic and Wegovy are believed to help with weight loss by reducing appetite, increasing feelings of fullness and regulating food intake. They are typically prescribed as part of a comprehensive weight management program that includes dietary modifications and increased physical activity.

Tirzepatide (Mounjaro) is a newer investigational medication that combines the actions of both a GLP-1 receptor agonist and a glucagon receptor agonist. It is currently in clinical trials for weight management. Early results have shown promising weight loss effects, with up to 15.7% of body weight reduction. Tirzepatide, which is sold under the brand name Mounjaro, is currently approved as a diabetes drug for adults with type 2 diabetes. Last fall, the FDA granted the medication a "fast-track" designation for review to treat obesity and overweight.



Semaglutide and tirzepatide are prescription medications for weight loss.

Potential Side Effects & Risks

It's important to note that these medications are intended for individuals who are obese or have significant weight-related health issues and have not achieved adequate weight loss through lifestyle changes alone. They should only be used under the supervision of a healthcare professional, who will assess the potential benefits and risks based on the individual's specific circumstances.

Dr. Richard Lee, Co-Founder and CEO of the Center for Medical Weight Loss in Tarrytown, NY explains, "Too many providers and practices are prescribing the GLP-1 medications without proper nutritional guidance and/or behavioral guidance. Side effects such as 'Ozempic Face' and 'Ozempic Butt' demonstrate the improper use of these medications. Although these medications are great tools to drive medical weight loss outcomes, when prescribed improperly without a comprehensive approach, they are no different from other fad diets of the past."



Weight loss drugs like Ozempic, Wegovy and Mounjaro may have side effects, including nausea, diarrhea and potential risks associated with their use. It is essential to discuss these potential risks and side effects with patients before they start taking any weight loss medication. When comparing these medications, some factors to consider include:

Efficacy: Clinical trials have shown that semaglutide-based drugs, such as Ozempic and Wegovy, can lead to significant weight loss, generally 15-22% of body weight. Tirzepatide (Mounjaro) is still under investigation, but early results indicate potential for substantial weight loss.

Administration: Semaglutide-based drugs are all administered via injections, although the frequency may vary and oral versions are being developed.

Side Effects: Each medication has its own set of potential side effects. Common side effects for semaglutide-based drugs include nausea, diarrhea and potential gastrointestinal effects.

Prescribing Considerations: The availability and prescribing guidelines for these medications may vary depending on regulatory approvals. Suitability of a certain medication depends on the patient's medical history, weight and other factors.

According to Dr. Janet Bond Brill, nutritionist and author, "Ozempic and Wegovy both work to imitate a hormone that increases the release of insulin, lowers blood sugar and slows digestion, thereby reducing appetite. Mounjaro works in the same way, but has an additional chemical that affects communication between the stomach and the brain—further reducing food cravings. However, these drugs have significant side effects. Mounjaro is a much more powerful drug, and may lead to more severe side effects than Ozempic and Wegovy, as well as more significant weight loss. Although rare, cases of kidney failure, pancreatitis, hypoglycemia and gastrointestinal bleeding have been reported."



Green tea extract is a dietary supplement with potential weight loss benefits.

Dr. Brill adds, "If you decide taking any of these drugs to lose weight is for you, understand that it is a lifelong drug—stop taking it and the weight rebounds. As with any healthy weight loss regimen, eating a nutritious, reduced-calorie diet and exercising regularly is still the gold standard for losing weight and maintaining good health."

All weight loss drugs should be seen as a complement to a comprehensive weight management plan that includes lifestyle modifications, such as a healthy diet, regular physical activity and behavioral changes. These medications are not a standalone solution and should be used in conjunction with other strategies for long-term weight management.

Weight Loss Supplements

While there are dietary supplements marketed for weight loss, it's important to approach them with caution. The effectiveness and safety of weight loss supplements can vary, and some may have limited scientific evidence to support their claims. Here's an overview of some commonly marketed weight loss supplements:

Green Tea Extract is often touted for its potential weight loss benefits. It contains catechins, which are believed to boost metabolism and fat oxidation. While some studies suggest a modest effect on weight loss, the overall evidence is mixed, and the impact on weight loss is likely to be minimal.

Orlistat (Xenical) is an FDA-approved prescription weight loss medication available in higher doses by prescription or over the counter as Alli. It works by blocking the absorption of dietary fat in the digestive system. Orlistat can lead to modest weight loss but may cause gastrointestinal side effects.

It's crucial to note that dietary supplements are not regulated as strictly as prescription medications. The quality, safety and efficacy of these products can vary. Consultations with patients interested in starting any dietary supplement is important in order to evaluate individual patient circumstances, provide guidance and help monitor potential interactions with medications or existing health conditions.

Lifestyle Modifications

Ultimately, the most effective and sustainable approach to weight loss is a balanced diet, regular physical activity, behavior modifications and a healthy lifestyle. These lifestyle factors have a stronger evidence base for promoting weight loss and overall well-being.

When it comes to lifestyle modifications for weight loss, there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach, as individual preferences, medical conditions and overall health play a role. However, certain strategies have shown effectiveness for many people. Here are some commonly recommended lifestyle modifications for weight loss:

Caloric Deficit: Creating a caloric deficit is crucial for weight loss. This can be achieved by reducing overall calorie intake while maintaining a balanced diet. Tracking food intake and portion sizes can help individuals become more aware of their calorie consumption.

Increased Physical Activity: Regular physical activity is essential for weight loss. Combining cardiovascular exercises (e.g., brisk walking, jogging, cycling) with strength training can help burn calories, build muscle and boost metabolism. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week, along with muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days.

Intermittent Fasting: Intermittent fasting involves alternating periods of fasting and eating. Common approaches include the 16/8 method (fasting for 16 hours, eating within an 8-hour window) or alternate-day fasting. This approach may help



reduce overall calorie intake and promote weight loss for some individuals. However, it's important to find a fasting pattern that suits individual patients' lifestyle and preferences.

Balanced and Nutritious Diet: Following a balanced diet is crucial for sustainable weight loss. The Mediterranean diet, which emphasizes whole foods, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats like olive oil, has been associated with various health benefits, including weight management. Other effective dietary approaches include the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet and the plant-based or vegetarian diet.

Portion Control and Mindful Eating: Practicing portion control and mindful eating can help individuals develop a healthier relationship with food. This involves paying attention to hunger and fullness cues, eating slowly and savoring each bite. Avoiding distractions while eating, such as TV or screens, can also promote mindful eating.

Behavior and Lifestyle Changes: Addressing behavioral and lifestyle factors is essential for long-term weight management. This includes managing stress, getting adequate sleep, developing healthy coping mechanisms and addressing emotional eating patterns.

Seeking support from healthcare professionals, registered dietitians or support groups can be beneficial in making sustainable behavior changes.



Lifestyle modifications for weight loss include eating a balanced and nutritious diet.

Some Final Thoughts

According to Dr. Gregory Buford, Board Certified Plastic Surgeon, "The skin is the largest organ in our body, and so it only goes to reason that it is critical to include key micronutrients and the appropriate amount of protein while dieting. Cutting out these essential building blocks can have a huge negative impact on the appearance of our skin. This is why smart dieting is the right choice when trying to cut weight. Doing it wrong can lead to weight loss, but it also backfires if along with that weight loss, we now have a less than optimal appearance to our skin. "

Individual preferences, cultural considerations and underlying health conditions should be taken into account when choosing a weight loss approach. Providing personalized recommendations based on a patient's specific needs and goals is vital. The most effective weight loss strategy is one patients will be able to maintain in the long term and that supports overall health and well-being.

Helping your aesthetic clients lose unwanted pounds so they not only feel better, but look better, is a great way to increase your practice's profitability, drive new patient traffic and see your existing patients on a regular basis. All win-wins for your practice and your patients! ME



Cheryl Whitman is a celebrated author, speaker, and highly regarded national cosmetic marketing professional with more than 35 years in the Aesthetic Medical Spa Industry. A cosmetic anti-aging wellness "Influencer" she is one of the most sought after speakers in the industry. Mentoring all size practices and laser centers.

Ms. Whitman is the Founder and CEO of Beautiful Forever Consulting where she leads a top-notch team of executive-level consultants and business professionals to assist providers physicians expanding their existing practices and launching new profit centers.

Ms. Whitman is also the founder of Beautiful Forever University, which offers educational programs to Medi-spas and Aesthetic Practices. She is a Member of the MedEsthetics Advisory Board and is a Consultant for CareCredit Healthcare Financing.

Cheryl is the author of the "Aesthetic Medical Success System," a revolutionary program providing a turnkey educational success system that assists clients in brilliantly jumpstarting successful aesthetic and medical spa businesses.

Contact Cheryl Whitman by email at: Cheryl@beautifulforever.com or by telephone at: 561-299-3909.



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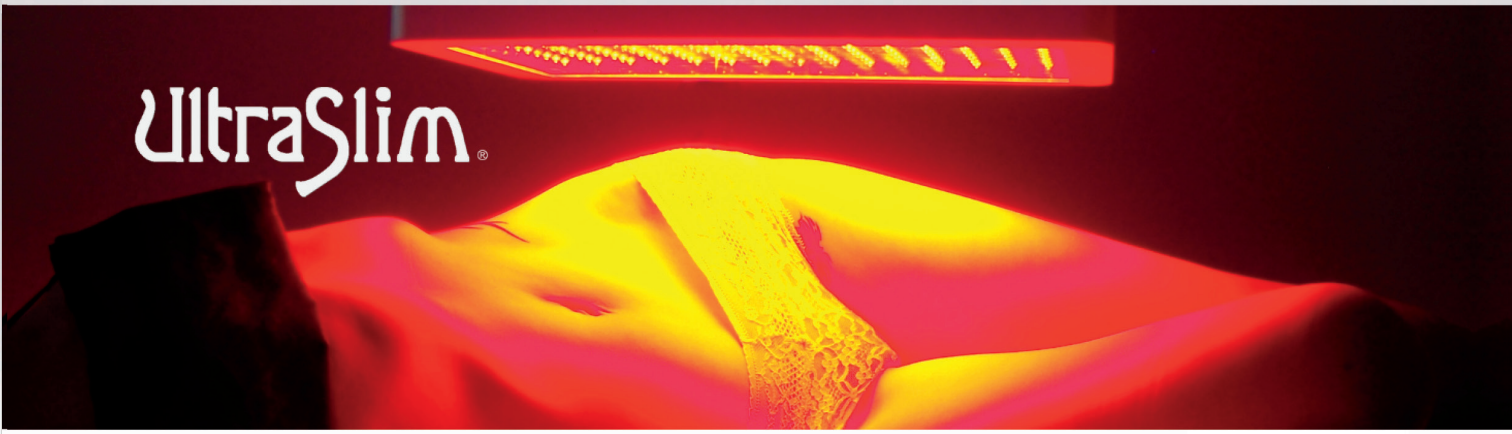

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Comparing Treatment Options For Fungal Acne

Determine the best course of treatment by targeting the source of yeast overgrowth

By Samuel Hetz, M.D., M.Sc.

What is Fungal Acne?

Fungal acne is a common condition many struggle to understand and overcome without access to proper treatment. When a patient seeks a professional opinion, it is vital to correctly diagnose the yeast overgrowth that causes fungal acne, to best determine the appropriate course of treatment.


Oral treatments include fluconazole and accutane.

Malassezia yeasts are naturally found on the body and near the hair follicles. When there is an overgrowth of this yeast inside the hair follicles, it can lead to inflammation of the pore and present as pustules, papules and nodules— all of which can be tender to the touch. The most common symptoms of fungal acne are itching and clusters of these small red bumps on the face, chest, back, neck and arms. The location variance depends on the patient, as fungal acne can present anywhere with hair follicles on the body.

Yeast traditionally thrives in warm and moist environments, which means it can quickly multiply on hot and sweaty skin for extended periods. Malassezia overgrowth is also commonly seen in patients with immunosuppression and those on antibiotics. While antibiotics are a trusted and necessary treatment for many bacterial infections, they are known to decrease the amount of good bacteria everywhere in the body, which can lead to an overgrowth of yeast. Therefore, treating fungal acne comes down to targeting the source of yeast overgrowth.

Oral Treatment Options

Fluconazole and Itraconazole

Oral prescriptions for fungal acne are usually the first treatment course explored for a patient who presents with a case of fungal acne, regardless of the severity. Oral solutions are very effective because they target fungal cells' growth and function, which traditionally leads to yeast overgrowth on the skin. Fluconazole and Itraconazole are the two most common prescriptions for fungal infections, including Malassezia yeast overgrowth. While side effects are rare, patients should know that nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and dermatitis are all possible adverse reactions to the medication. It is important to advise patients on the best practices for taking the medication based on their prescription strength and to ask patients if they are on any anti-infectives that may inhibit the effectiveness of the anti-fungal prescription.

Accutane

Another oral solution that can be explored for patients with fungal acne is Accutane. As established, fungal acne is due to an overgrowth of yeast, which feeds on sebum naturally produced in the skin's pores. Accutane eliminates the sebum-producing function of these glands, effectively cutting off the nutrient source to the yeast spores and helping combat the development of papules. However, Accutane is not without its side effects and should only be explored when other oral and topical solutions are exhausted for your patient.

Topical Treatment Options

Benzoyl Peroxide

An over-the-counter benzoyl peroxide is a good starting point for patients, and they may have even tried this before the consultation. While benzoyl peroxide is an effective bacteria-eliminating agent, it does not contain the necessary anti-fungal properties to address the root of the yeast overgrowth on the patient's skin. If looking to include benzoyl peroxide in a treatment plan, a cleanser containing the active agent will best be used alongside an anti-fungal cream or gel applied after cleansing.

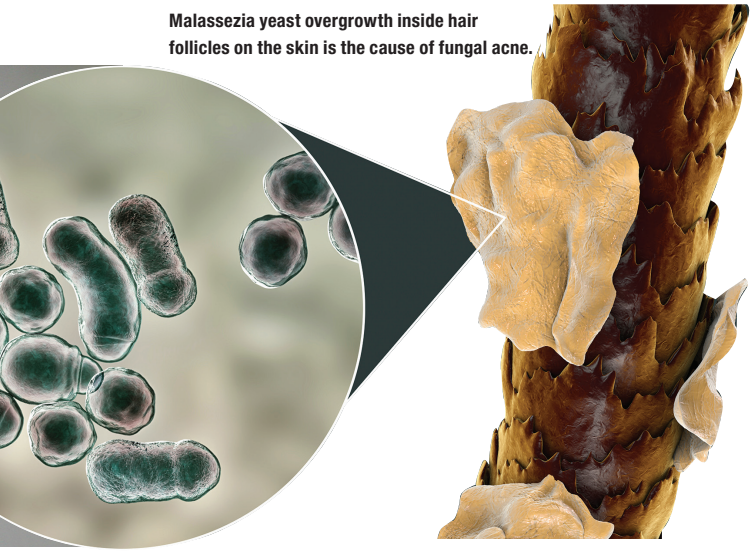

Benzoyl peroxide is often used prior to applying other topical solutions.

Anti-fungal Medications

Antifungal skin creams should be the cornerstone of a curated skin care regimen for patients who present with fungal acne. Econazole and ketoconazole are two standard options that should begin to clear symptoms in 2-4 weeks when used as prescribed. It is best to provide instructions to the patient for application based on what area of the body has the breakouts. For example, if the acne pimples are on the back, the patient will likely want to wear loose-fitting cotton clothes to avoid irritation after applying the product. While relatively uncommon, allergic and adverse reactions may occur, so it is crucial to ensure that patients are well-informed. Topical antifungal agents combined with oral antifungal treatments are shown to help expedite treatment results for patients, so it is worth exploring multiple treatment options at once for more severe cases of fungal acne.

Sulphur Treatment

Lastly, sulphur is another topical ingredient that is often essential for treating fungal acne. The combination of antibacterial, anti-fungal and sebum-reducing properties makes it the ideal treatment for acne vulgaris and yeast overgrowth causing fungal acne. Here, the application will be crucial for patient results. Ensure you direct patients on adequately applying either a sulphur-based cream or mask so that the skin can absorb the anti-fungal properties. These treatments should always be applied to a clean face, and with consistent use, results are often seen in 4-6 weeks. Sulphur masks and creams can also be combined with the former two treatment options – just be sure to advise patients based on their unique skin type.



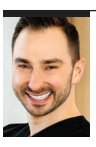
Malassezia yeast overgrowth inside hair follicles on the skin is the cause of fungal acne.



Sulphur treatment for fungal acne.

The Diagnostic Process

A diagnostic process is the key to helping patients combat their acne conditions. Knowing the signs and symptoms of fungal acne and how it interacts with traditional acne treatments is crucial for identifying underlying causes. When patients present issues related to those pesky uniform papules and pustules, they may be struggling with Malassezia yeast overgrowth. As many medical providers know, there is no one size fits all solution for fungal acne, especially when a patient also struggles with bacterial or hormonal acne. Knowing the compounding effects of the differing topical and oral solutions out there can help you better tailor skin care treatments to your patient's needs. ME



Samuel Hetz, M.D., M.Sc. is the Medical Director of Concept Medical. Concept Medical is a physician-led medical aesthetic and cosmetic dermatology practice. Dr. Hetz has undergone extensive training in primary care dermatology and aesthetic medicine, including neuromodulators such as Nuceiva®, Botox Cosmetic®, soft tissue filler treatments, as well as the delivery of energy-based technologies.

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Some of the types of hyperpigmentation that can be treated include:

Melasma: Melasma is characterized by dark, symmetrical patches on the face.

Post-Inflammatory Hyperpigmentation (PIH): PIH is caused by inflammation or injury to the skin, such as acne, inflammation, or a burn. It results in dark patches or spots on the skin.

Solar Lentigines: Also known as age spots or liver spots, solar lentigines are caused by sun exposure and are typically found on areas of the skin that are frequently exposed to the sun.

Patients with skin of color, including those with darker skin tones, are more likely to have hyperpigmentation due to several factors:

Increased melanin production: People with darker skin tones have more melanin in their skin, which makes them more susceptible to hyperpigmentation.

Sun damage: Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can cause hyperpigmentation. Darker skin tones are more prone to UV damage.

Inflammation: Caused by acne or eczema, can lead to hyperpigmentation.

Hormonal changes: Hyperpigmentation can occur as a result of hormonal changes, such as those caused by pregnancy or certain medications.

Genetics: Hyperpigmentation can also be inherited. A family history of hyperpigmentation can increase the likelihood of developing the condition.

There are many standard treatment options for patients with skin of color, but now there's a laser device that lets you safely treat patients of all skin types for a range of pigmentary disorders. The revolutionary Neo

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Elite® 650-microsecond 1064nm laser has been used successfully to treat melasma, acne, postinflammatory hyperpigmentation, pseudofolliculitis barbae, hair removal, acne keloidalis nuchae, and aging skin in skin of color.[1]

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AEROLASE NEO ELITE:

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- Increased safety profile for Fitzpatrick skin types IV-VI and tanned skin
- Absorption in all skin chromophores for comprehensive therapy
- No skin cooling or anesthetics needed
- No skin contact by the handpiece



Photos courtesy of Arusha Campbell-Chambers, MD



After 4 Treatments
Photo courtesy of Brian Johnson, MD & Tiffany Crews, LE



Photo courtesy of Arusha campbe;;-Chambers, MD



After 4 Treatments
Photo courtesy of Jason Emer, MD



PIH & Rejuvenation
Photos Courtesy of Jennifer Parker Porter, MD

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Leading the Barrier Repair REVOLUTION

Carl Thornfeldt, M.D., On Becoming the Father of Skin Barrier Repair.

Written by Rebecca Lane

Carl Thornfeldt, M.D., has sought to help improve the lives of others his entire life. Whether it is his family, his community, his patients, his country or those suffering from skin health problems around the world, Dr. Thornfeldt has dedicated time to making a difference in their lives. Growing up on a rural sheep and Christmas tree farm outside Portland, Oregon, he watched his father, a prominent pediatrician, care for his patients using a holistic approach to improving their health and quality of life. His father's example and the positive impact he had on their community would go on to inspire his passion for helping people and his later approach to skin health and taking care of the skin barrier, as well as his love for rural America and smalltown communities.



"My father was a pediatrician and the Chief of Pediatrics at the Medical School in Portland, as well as a pioneer in neonatal medicine. He invented the first bassinets for oxygen for the neonates, and in fact, the medication and treatment that he invented in the sixties are still being used as a treatment today. He was truly an inspiration to me."

Transforming Childhood Struggles Into a Lifelong Mission

Dr. Thornfeldt's negative childhood experiences suffering from severe eczema and the toll the extensive topical medications took on his quality of life, along with the example his father set as a pediatrician, left him certain he wanted to be a doctor from a young age. "I knew I wanted to be a physician when I was in fifth grade. I suffered with some significant skin problems and knew I wanted to specialize in dermatology because with that speciality I could take care of people of all ages and a variety of diseases. I knew how much I suffered and I wanted to help prevent other people from suffering as I did," says Dr. Thornfeldt.

After earning his undergraduate degree, Dr. Thornfeldt attended Oregon Health and Science University for medical school, during which he had the opportunity to prepare and run numerous clinical trials and discovered his love of the research side of medicine. Rather than take the easy route, Dr. Thornfeldt decided to enlist in the U.S. Navy his second year of medical school. After graduating, he then spent his residency in general medicine serving as the general practice physician at the U.S. Naval base in Holy Loch, Scotland.

He recalls, "I practiced family medicine while in the Navy, and one of the things I observed there was a lot of the foundational nutrition and health issues people weren't complying with, and that had a big impact on how they would heal and how successful the treatments were going to be. Patient compliance can be a big preventer of success."

Dr. Thornfeldt completed his dermatology specialty training at University Hospital at University of California, San Diego in 1983, and immediately set about starting his practice. He chose to move to Ontario, Oregon to set up his dermatology practice, with the desire to provide care to the small town communities along the southern border of Oregon and Idaho where dermatologists were in short supply.

"I wanted to practice in an area that really needed a specialist, and started my practice in Ontario, Oregon about 1 hour west of Boise, Idaho on the Oregon/Idaho border in 1983. My parents had moved to Ontario, and my dad had a pediatrics clinic so I joined him by adding dermatology to the practice. My mom was his head nurse. I chose this area because there were 10 counties that had no dermatologist in Eastern Oregon and Southwest Idaho. I was the first dermatologist there, and for 32 years I was the only dermatologist in the Southeastern third of Oregon and all southwest Idaho," Dr. Thornfeldt explains.

Searching for a Better Solution

After watching his patients go through the same struggles seeking relief from chronic skin conditions only to have the treatments hinder their quality of life in another way, Dr. Thornfeldt was set on finding a solution by the time 1989 rolled around. He states, "When I came to the realization that the number one purpose of the skin is protection, and yet every treatment (hydroxy acids, the retinoids, the steroids) would contribute to destroying the barrier - the skin's protection. I also came to the realization that if it was broken, it can also be repaired. I started doing some research into the epidermis and stratum corneum, which is the outermost layer. I was surprised to learn that very little research had been done on the stratum and epidermis, as opposed to the dermis."

"We were the first ones to actually look at the skin barrier specifically, and not only what it did, but also how it repaired itself from injury."

It was at this point that he decided to coordinate a team of researchers in the San Francisco Bay Area to perform an intensive study of skin function and botanical activity in the skin. This effort became the original bench research that led to his later use of botanicals in his line of Epionce skin care products.

"I reasoned that lipids, fats and oils had to be the critical function of the most important structure, so In 1989 I put together a team with Dr. Peter Elias, one of the top lipid researchers in the country, to really understand all the science behind the skin barrier function. Nobody had done that. We were the first ones to actually look at

the skin barrier specifically, and not only what it did, but also how it repaired itself from injury. That's one of the critical factors and nobody had done any work on that, so we pioneered that," says Dr. Thornfeldt.

This first step was the beginning of Dr. Thornfeldt's journey to becoming the literal father of skin barrier repair. By 1997, before anyone was even considering or aware of the importance of the skin barrier to overall skin health, Dr. Thornfeldt was granted the very first patent on barrier repair. His initial research into botanicals and their affect on skin health and barrier function led him to pioneer their use in clinical grade topical skin care.

He relates, "Our research team grew and we were very successful in understanding that the major driver for skin diseases and skin conditions, including skin aging, was the damaged skin barrier and the uncontrolled inflammation. Hundreds of studies were published and we received several international awards on this research."

Launching a Botanical Barrier Repair Revolution

Well before the medical community was ready to accept the promising potential of using botanicals in clinical products, Dr. Thornfeldt became an impassioned pioneer of botanical-based topical solutions created to improve his patients' lives. He found that incorporating botanicals into topical skin care formulations helped drive the active ingredients aimed at treating his patients' chronic skin conditions into the skin while eliminating the irritation of the skin barrier caused by other topical treatments.

"We were looking for ways to repair the skin barrier. We found that the pathways were complex in repair, and I realized that plants have these active pathways and that was my inspiration for Epionce. I decided to develop products that we can use to prevent side effects of prescription medications, make prescription medications work better and make sure that when we get patients clear, they would stay clear for a much longer time. I shifted my focus on botanical research and products based on botanicals, the basis of Epionce," he explains.

Dr. Thornfeldt's passionate pursuit to provide better solutions for his patients came to fruition in 2002 when he founded Episciences, Inc. He began manufacturing Epionce products while still working full time at his practice, initially distributing them solely to his own patients. This development allowed him to finally create a line of topical skin care products utilizing botanicals



Years of research and hundreds of published studies on the skin barrier led Dr. Thornfeldt to research the potential of botanicals in skin care.

to provide his patients the kind of skin care options he wished would have been available during his own childhood struggles with chronic skin conditions.

Dr. Thornfeldt says, “My main driver for developing Episciences was to help me be a better doctor, to provide products that will work for my patients, change their lives and that would help me also be accountable to my patients. My inspiration is always to get patients cured. I myself didn’t like putting on a lot of the medicines for my skin disease, and the big problem in medicine, still today, is getting people to use the medicine properly and make sure that they use a regimen. If you don’t like using it, you’ll use it a little bit and get some benefit, but I never really saw people’s skin get clear. This is why I was so adamant that Epionce products needed to be formulations people would like using and want to use.”

Changing Patient Lives

Since creating his first Epionce skin care product and launching the now well known and loved business behind the skin care line, Dr. Thornfeldt has seen his products change many patients’ lives over the years, helping them to not only treat their skin conditions, but keep them under control and in remission for far longer than previous treatment options. The patients and families he’s been able to help have been the true reward for his incredible work.



Botanicals in products increased treatment efficacy without irritating skin.

"I had a mom crying with relief because her child's eczema was so much better they could all finally sleep through the night. "

“I used Epionce in conjunction with prescription therapies, but Epionce helped mitigate negative side effects of those prescriptions and keep diseases in remission for longer periods of time. Epionce helped change lives for many of my patients, not only from an anti-aging perspective but from a quality of life perspective for those with skin diseases. I had a mom crying with relief in my office because her child’s eczema was so much better that they could all finally sleep through the night. I had patients finally have confidence because their skin was clear without the redness caused by harsh acne treatments. I saw the melasma of patients who had failed hydroquinone and laser treatments go away,” states Dr. Thornfeldt.

Just as he did from the start, Dr. Thornfeldt heavily emphasizes clinical research and quantifiable data ensuring formulations for new products provide proven safe and effective results in his continued work to develop topical skin care to further enhance skin barrier health. His dedication to intensive research and clinical studies prompted the building of the company’s 18,000 square foot laboratory and manufacturing facility in Boise, Idaho where his skin barrier research continues to be at the literal “heart” of Epionce products.

He relates, “Beyond the verbal testimonials, I also felt it was critically important to do controlled clinical trials on our final, market ready formulations. We have over 15 clinical studies on those products. For example,

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Dr. Thornfeldt aimed to create effective products patients would want to use, as getting them to actually follow a daily regimen is a common problem that hinders treatment.

the combination of Epionce Renewal Facial Cream and Lytic Tx, were twice as effective in rejuvenating the dermis than the retinoid/hydroxy acid combination, and without any irritation or other side effects. 40% of the retinoid participants had irritation. We're able to prove that our products not only work better, they're safer than anything else on the market."

A Rewarding Journey & Endless Quest

Dr. Thornfeldt reflects on his journey to provide patients dealing with skin problems, particularly those with severe chronic skin conditions, the kind of effective relief and treatments to repair their skin health without hindering their quality of life in the process.

As his lifelong mission to bring these treatment options that were unavailable during his childhood struggle to patients going through the same ordeal comes full circle, he shares, "It is incredibly gratifying to have been on this journey. I became a dermatologist to help my people get well, and I developed Epionce to help me be a better doctor. I never had a patient ask to only get 50% clear - they want to get completely clear and have quality of life. That has been my mission from day 1 - to help my patients reach that goal. I also love the research and development process. It is challenging and rewarding. There have been many rewarding moments professionally over the years - from patents and publications to awards - but ultimately seeing people live free from their disease has been the most important thing to me."

However, despite the success of his work over the past decades, Dr. Thornfeldt knows his quest is truly endless, with still many exciting advances in our understanding and ability to better repair and support the health of the skin barrier on the horizon. He explains, "When I first started Epionce, my theory on the importance of the skin barrier was not widely accepted. I have fought an uphill battle for the last 20 years writing and speaking on the topic. Now that there is a wider acceptance and understanding of the importance of the skin barrier, I believe more research will be focused on it. There is still much to learn about the largest organ of the body, generally speaking. I am continuing to do my own work on new ways to improve the health of the skin."

He leaves us with a final determined look toward future progress, "We will continue to research and innovate. We will continue to take the narrow, difficult path because we want to continue the process of developing products that are proven to be effective, modulate underlying abnormalities and yet, also have proven safety with it. That strategy will not change. We will continue to follow the science and see how science advances." ME

Rebecca Lane is the managing editor of *MedEsthetics*.


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DETAILS BY CHESAHNA KINDRED, M.D., M.B.A., FAAD



Energy-Based Treatments for Acne

The benefits of different energy-based treatments for acne.

Acne vulgaris, a widespread inflammatory dermatosis of the pilosebaceous unit, is one of the most prevalent skin concerns globally. In the United States alone, it affects approximately 50 million individuals annually. While traditionally associated with adolescents, this condition extends into adulthood, impacting individuals in their 20s and 30s. Acne constitutes the primary reason for seeking dermatological treatment, with over 85% of adolescents and young adults aged 12 to 24 years experiencing some degree of acne, and its incidence among adults continues to rise. Notably, over 90% of acne cases are classified as mild to moderate.

Acne Therapies

The landscape of acne therapy encompasses diverse treatments, including retinoids, antibiotics, hormones, light, lasers and various combinations of these modalities. However, utilizing only topical and oral medications to treat acne comes with challenges. These therapies often come with adverse effects, incomplete response, contraindications and the problem of recurrence. Oral antibiotics carry the risk of bacterial resistance and disruption of the skin's microbiome. Despite the efficacy demonstrated by current acne therapies, the rising apprehension around antibiotic resistance, particularly concerning Cutibacterium acnes (C. acnes), is discernible. The resistance to antibiotics like erythromycin has surged by more than 50%. Moreover, the adherence of patients to topical therapy, often demanding daily applications, is notably problematic, especially among younger demographics. While oral isotretinoin is the most effective systemic medication for moderate-to-severe acne, its usage entails significant risks.

Laser & Light-Based Therapies

In 2009, the Global Alliance reported that laser and light-based therapies, including photodynamic therapy (PDT), proved most valuable as supplementary measures to medical therapy or for individuals unable or unwilling to undergo medical therapy. These modalities reduce levels of C. acnes by exciting light-sensitive porphyrins, disrupting sebaceous gland activities and potentially affecting inflammatory cytokines. A range of light sources and lasers with wavelengths absorbed by porphyrins were identified, including narrowband and broadband light, pulsed dye lasers (PDLs) at 585 nm, potassium titanyl phosphate (KTP) lasers at 532 nm and lasers and light sources in the range of 610 to 635 nm. Longer wavelengths from 1064 to 1726nm are shown to be less absorbed by porphyrins; however, they heat the sebaceous glands, resulting in reduced gland size and sebum output.

"The synergistic effects achievable by combining energy-based therapy with other treatments offer exciting future prospects."

The pursuit of effective light-based interventions for acne has taken various avenues, including blue and red light, ultraviolet light and intense pulsed light. Mid-infrared lasers have been used to treat acne in clinical trials. These lasers, including 1320, 1450 and 1540nm, target the depth of skin where sebaceous glands reside. They have been classified as lasers that destroy sebaceous glands. Treatment is accompanied by cryogen spray cooling to protect the epidermis and increase patient comfort. While the target of the first acne lasers was to destroy the sebaceous gland, it is theorized that the objective of the therapy is to suppress sebum output without destroying sebaceous glands since sebum production is critical for maintaining skin homeostasis, lubrication and physiological defense against environmental and infectious insults.

Neo Elite Acne Treatment

Studies have noted the effectiveness of neodymium-doped yttrium aluminum garnet (Nd:YAG) lasers in acne management. In particular, it has garnered support from high-level studies compared to other laser devices. There is strong evidence of the efficacy and tolerability of Neo Elite by Aerolase, a 650-microsecond pulsed 1064nm Nd:YAG laser therapy for mild to severe facial acne vulgaris that has been well-evaluated in patients aged 19 to 40 years. Its treatment advantages for acne are diverse. The Neo works by reducing excess sebum production rather than destroying the sebaceous gland, reduces the effects of inflammation and reduce inflammatory lesions. A recent clinical study showcases a median reduction of 84% in lesion count after six weeks and 87% at 90 days, boasts 90% patient satisfaction at six weeks and 90 days post-treatment and remarkably, does not cause edema, erythema, acne flare-ups, dryness, scarring or hyperpigmentation during or after treatment. This novel laser employs a short-pulse duration and delivers high energy within this short pulse, making it a noninvasive and safe option for moderate-to-severe acne treatment. The laser's unique advantages are particularly beneficial for patients with darker skin tones, as its shorter pulse duration prevents excessive heating of the surrounding skin, minimizing the risk of pigmentary changes.

AviClear Acne Treatment

The evolution of energy-based devices in acne treatment has ushered in promising developments. The AviClear laser by Cutera, operating at a wavelength of 1726nm, has gained FDA clearance for mild-to-severe acne treatment. Sebum, which has an absorption coefficient slightly higher than water at 1726nm looks viable for sebaceous gland selective photothermolysis. The selective targeting of the sebaceous glands using photothermolysis allows maximum damage to the sebaceous gland while preserving other skin structures. Early evaluations showed histologic changes of 1726nm laser selective destruction of sebocytes and clinical improvement that can last two years after treatment. Clinical trials involving this technique showcased a significant reduction in inflammatory acne lesions with multiple treatments at 4-week intervals. A study by Goldberg, et al., shows a reduced total number of inflammatory lesions by more than 52% within one month of treatment and improved further to 56% by the third-month post-final-treatment session, with high patient satisfaction. The Accure System by Accure Acne Inc., is another 1726nm laser that has recently received FDA clearance for mild to severe inflammatory acne vulgaris.





Educating and setting patient expectations up front is key to maximizing treatment success.

Combining Energy-Based Therapies with Other Treatments

Energy-based therapies, often used with systemic therapies and at-home skin care regimens, offer potential benefits even for patients on antibiotics, as the laser energy complements the antibiotics' effects.

This innovative landscape of energy-based acne treatments holds particular promise for patients with limited options, such as individuals who cannot tolerate the adverse effects of oral or topical therapies. Moreover, the synergistic effects achievable by combining energy-based therapy with other treatments offer exciting future prospects. Although further research and long-term safety data are needed, lasers represent a significant leap in the effective treatment of acne.

Educating and Preparing Patients

As clinicians embrace energy-based options for acne treatment, several vital considerations come to the fore. Patients must be informed that while these treatments offer considerable clearing, they may not guarantee complete resolution. Multiple treatment sessions often yield more significant results than a single session, with sustained improvement often observed weeks after the last treatment. Dermatologists should ensure that patients follow pre- and post-treatment instructions meticulously to minimize side effects and maximize outcomes. Furthermore, adjunctive skin care tailored to acne-prone skin is essential for maintaining results and preventing new breakouts.

The realm of energy-based devices is transforming acne management, providing new avenues of treatment that complement traditional approaches. With their potential to mitigate adverse effects associated with antibiotics and topicals, energy-based therapies stand as promising solutions, particularly for individuals with limited treatment options. While the long-term safety and efficacy of these modalities require further exploration, their integration into acne treatment regimens heralds a significant advancement in improving patient outcomes and quality of life. ME



Board-certified dermatologist **Chesahna Kindred, M.D., M.B.A.,** practices in Columbia, Maryland, at Kindred Hair & Skin Center — the first dermatology office with a full-service salon specializing in hair loss. She grew up in South Central Los Angeles, earned her BS with a minor in Spanish at the University of Southern California, was the third person in the history of the University of Cincinnati to earn an M.D./M.B.A. degree, and later completed dermatology training at Howard University Department of Dermatology. Dr. Kindred is the immediate past chair of the dermatology section of the National Medical Association and founder and president of Onyx Medical Society.



How Probiotics are Advancing Skin Health Science

Recognition of the skin microbiome's importance in skin health has led to the innovation of new products that utilize probiotics to combat signs of aging.

Balancing the microbiome using probiotics and fermented ingredients is a major trend emerging in skin care. In *MedEsthetics*' September issue, we detailed the benefits of the fermentation process, specifically with mushrooms, in skin care products.

Fermentation is a metabolic process that produces chemical changes in organic substances through the action of enzymes. Biofermented mushrooms are mushrooms that have been put through a fermentation process using different strains of microorganisms and can penetrate deeper than regular mushrooms, resulting in more potent and effective skin care products.

Probiotic skin care uses live microorganisms to improve skin health. According to *Medical News Today*, probiotics have been used since the beginning of the 20th century when Louis Pasteur discovered them as the source of fermentation in foods such as yogurt. In the human body, probiotics make up part of the microbiome, which is the collection of microorganisms that naturally inhabit the digestive tract, skin and other parts of the body.

When combined properly, probiotics increase the number of beneficial bacteria to restore equilibrium of the skin's microbiome ecosystem and natural defenses. Prebiotics fuel probiotic growth and help them thrive, while postbiotics, by-products of the fermentation process caused by the interaction between probiotics and the skin's microbiome, work synergistically to restore and support skin health, youthfulness and radiance.

Various studies have demonstrated the benefits of probiotics. A 2016 study[1] reviewed the effects of probiotics on the skin in clinical trials and animal experiments, and found that probiotics can help in restoring acidic skin pH, reducing damage from UV light, reducing oxidative stress and improving skin barrier function.

A study[2] in 2023 found that probiotics are effective against skin photoaging in terms of MMP pathways and reversing skin barrier function from murine randomized data. The study concluded that further randomized controlled trials on humans are required to confirm these results.

The probiotics market is booming due to new discoveries and interest within the medical aesthetics industry. According to a research report by Market Research Future (MRFR), the probiotics market is set to reach $3.257 billion by 2025.

One company utilizing probiotics to support the microbiome is Young Pharmaceuticals. The company's BAK Healthy Aging Moisture Boost Cream and Antioxidant Oil are a powerful probiotic duo that protect against outside pollution and free radicals, enhance skin renewal and support the microbiome. The cream contains the live probiotic strain PROBIKARIA and natural oils known for their hydrating and soothing effects.

While probiotics appear to have significant value in skin care, particularly in the anti-aging category, scientists warn that we are still learning about the skin microbiome and more research is needed to solidify the connection between probiotics, the microbiome and signs of aging.

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Tony Scianna is the associate editor of *MedEsthetics.*

Acne

Acne is one of the most common skin concerns patients seek to address. Fortunately, there are all kinds of acne products in medical aesthetics that target a variety of issues. Here are some of our favorite products for battling tedious and unsightly acne.



Canfield's **Visia Skin Analysis** captures high-quality, standardized before and after images and provides clients with a comprehensive assessment of their skin. Use TruSkin Age to reveal your client's overall skin condition and age. Canfield's RBX Technology separates the unique color signatures of red and brown skin components for unequaled visualization of conditions that result in color concentration.
Contact: 973.434.1200, canfieldsci.com



The Aerolase **Neo Derm** reduces sebum production, reduces inflammation, and destroys the p. acnes bacteria. The laser targets the inflammation of active acne and the vessels that feed the sebaceous gland. The sebaceous glands reduce the amount of sebum output, the active acne infection is cleared and skin returns to normal. The result is clearer, healthier-looking skin with fewer breakouts.
Contact: 914.345.8300, www.aerolase.com



Cutera **AviClear** uses 1726 nm wavelengths to treat acne at the source, selectively targeting and suppressing the sebaceous gland safely and effectively. Designed with patient comfort in mind, AviClear is enhanced with AviCool contact cooling for an optimal and safe treatment experience. Eliminate acne in three 30-minute sessions.
Contact: 415.657.5560, cutera.com



Global Beauty Private Label Skincare's **Blemish Lotion** 5% (10% also available) is an antibacterial treatment powered with 5% benzoyl peroxide that functions both as a lotion and a spot treatment. It provides potent relief that not only addresses existing acne and provides gentle exfoliation but also helps prevent future breakouts by eliminating the acne-causing bacteria at the source.
Contact: 888.659.7546, globalbeauty.net

BIGGEST TATTOO REGRETS IN 2023



While August 14th may not be a date that every American finds significant, those with tattoos they wish they'd never gotten can certainly appreciate National Tattoo Removal Day. According to a new report by Advanced Dermatology divulging American's biggest tattoo regrets in 2023, that applies to 1 in 4 people. The survey included responses from 1,002 people spread throughout the U.S., averaging 39 years of age, with 49% identifying themselves as male, 47% as female and 4% as non-binary or transgender.

Tattoo removal has indeed become increasingly popular, with 51% of people planning on getting at least one tattoo removed, per the report. Of course, this isn't as surprising when you consider 1 in 10 people have tattoos they chose to get for a significant other before they ended up parting ways.

THE SANOFI-REGENERON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AWARDS PROGRAM

To advance health equity in the specialty of dermatology, the Dermatology Foundation (DF) and the Skin of Color Society (SOCS) have partnered to establish a research awards program funded through a $1 million grant from Sanofi-Regeneron. The Sanofi-Regeneron Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Mid-Career Award will be available to three established investigators beginning in 2024; applications will be accepted beginning on Sept. 15, 2023. According to the SOCS, the award was developed for the mid-career investigator "with an established trajectory of excellence in basic, clinical or translational science."

The award aims to expand the understanding of dermatological issues impacting underrepresented or underserved groups in medicine. Supported research projects are expected to yield novel results that will provide urgently needed preliminary data and will serve as a springboard for obtaining larger research grants.

5 AI SKIN CARE TECHNOLOGIES PUSHING THE INDUSTRY

According to a report from InsightAce Analytic, the global AI in beauty and cosmetics market size is expected to reach $13.34 billion in 2030 with a CAGR of 19.7% from 2021 to 2030. The surge of AI beauty and skin care has a promising outlook for the future and continues to push beyond boundaries in all markets. There is no question that AI is creating a new lens to look through for skin care. Skin analysis is at everyone's fingertips, as is individualized skin care products.

Here are five AI skin care tenchologies that are pushing the industry:

1. Perfect Corp — Skin Type Detection AI technology
2. Haut.AI — Phygital Skin AI Tool
3. Cetaphil — Skin AI Analysis
4. Vichy Laboratoires — Skin Consult AI
5. Revieve — Personalized Digital Beauty Experiences

TOP 5 MEDSPA TRENDS IN 2023



MediSpa Media detailed their top five medspa treatment trends in 2023, which includes:

1. Cryo Sculpting,
2. Red Light Therapy,
3. Hydrafacials,
4. Plasma Lasers and 5. IV Therapy.

Cryo sculpting uses cold temperatures to cause blood vessels to contract and pores to tighten, resulting in firmer-looking skin. It allows clients to target and eliminate stubborn pockets of fat, without resorting to surgery. Red light therapy stimulates

collagen production, evens out skin tone and reduces inflammation. Hydrafacials combine exfoliation, deep cleansing and intense hydration to give the skin a healthy and youthful glow. Plasma lasers use ionized gas to deliver targeted energy to the skin, promoting collagen production, tightening sagging skin and reducing the appearance of wrinkles and scars. Finally, IV therapy has been slowly growing for its anti-aging benefits in addition to its general health benefits. Customized IV infusions deliver essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients directly into the bloodstream, helping to increase energy, improve immune function and enhance hydration.

WHY TIKTOK'S BERBERINE TREND IS NOT NATURE'S OZEMPIC



Berberine is a plant-based compound gaining popularity on social media as a supplement replacement for Ozempic and Wegovy, and it has often been referred to as Nature's Ozempic, being grouped together with the other diabetes medications being used off-label for weight loss. But whether it actually works or not is still up for debate, and the current evidence suggests it is not the miracle drug Tik Tok influencers claim it to be, medical experts told CNN.

Berberine may enhance the body's natural production of GLP-1, or glucagon-like peptide 1, a gastrointestinal hormone that's used in Ozempic and other new weight loss drugs in the form of semaglutide. That effect is the main contributor to the connection made between berberine and Ozempic. Berberine is considered a dietary supplement by the U.S. FDA and is regulated as a food, not a drug. Because of that, proper clinical research has not been done to confirm that its ability to facilitate weight loss is clinically significant.

MEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO DIE FROM MELANOMA THAN WOMEN



Men with melanoma are more likely to die than women with melanoma, especially men with skin of color, according to an article published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology (JAAD). The analysis involved more than 200,000 participants and is the largest study to date on racial differences in men with melanoma. It compared melanoma diagnosis data from the National Cancer Database from 2004 until 2018 in White, Black, Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Hispanic men. Overall survival rates in men with melanoma were highest for White men (75%), followed by American Indian/Alaskan Native (69%), Asian (68%), Hispanic (66%) and Black men (52%).

White and American Indian/Alaskan Native men were more likely to develop melanoma on the trunks of their bodies, while Black, Asian and Hispanic men were more likely to develop it in their lower extremities, and Black, Hispanic and Asian men are more likely to have melanoma diagnosed at an advanced stage when it is more difficult to treat, specifically areas that are not exposed to the sun, according to the report.

EVENTS

October 15-16, International Esthetics, Cosmetics & Spa Conference, Palm Beach, Florida, Contact: www.iecscflorida.com

October 19-22, Global Aesthetics 2023, Miami, Florida, Contact: www.globalaestheticsconference.com

October 25-29, International Society of Plastic and Aesthetic Nurses, Austin, Texas, Contact: www.ispan.org/meeting

October 26-29, Plastic Surgery The Meeting, Austin, Texas, Contact: www.plasticsurgerythemeeting.com

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FDA Updates Recommendations on Dermal Fillers for Patient Safety

The FDA recommends against the use of soft tissue fillers to increase breast size and the use of permanent fillers like silicone for cosmetic treatment, among other new guidelines.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently updated its recommendations on dermal fillers, reportedly in response to postmarketing data from the FDA's adverse event–reporting databases, including the Manufacturer and User Facility Device Experience (MAUDE) for devices and the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) for vaccines, published literature and recommendations from federal agencies and professional societies.

The FDA website was updated to include certain risks of using dermal fillers such as swelling and bruising, as well as less common risks like inflammation following viral or bacterial illnesses or infections, vaccinations or dental procedures.

Some new safety benefits include a recommendation against using soft tissue fillers in the body to increase breast or gluteal size, using dermal fillers in high-risk locations, the use of permanent fillers like silicone for cosmetic treatment and the use of needle free or any over-the-counter injection device.

The FDA also added separate sections of recommendations geared to patients and health care providers, including a recommendation that patients seek a practitioner in dermatology or plastic surgery to perform dermal filler treatments.

"Main takeaway for patients: Seek out a board-certified dermatologist or plastic surgeon who only uses FDA approved products, never treat yourself and educate yourself about the risks," said Sue Ellen Cox, M.D., FAAD, the founder and medical director of Aesthetic Solutions and a past president of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS).

Dr. Cox also co-authored the 2021 report in Dermatologic Surgery, "Preventing and Treating Adverse Events of Injectable Fillers: Evidence-Based Recommendations From the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery Multidisciplinary Task Force." She thinks the FDA should regularly update and re-evaluate its recommendations to keep consumers educated on important medical risks.

"It is necessary so that consumers are educated regarding proper use of a dermal filler for cosmetic treatment as well as the inherent risks of such treatments," Dr. Cox said.

In addition to the rarity of these complications, the FDA also claimed that they tend to be easily treatable. Despite this, it is still important to be aware of all possible risks associated with the use of dermal fillers, as this allows the patient and practitioner to discuss these risks and their likelihood, so both parties can make the safest choice for that patient and be prepared in case complications do arise. The FDA encourages consumers and patients to discuss all treatment options, including dermal filler procedures, with their health care provider to understand the benefits and risks associated with the use of these medical devices.

Dr. Cox would like to see further evaluation and guidelines from the FDA that details infections and complications beyond the most severe cases.

"The guidelines focus on the most severe risk of fillers—intravascular events which can lead to stroke, blindness or necrosis," Cox said. "It does not go into any detail about the risks of allergic reactions both Type I (immediate) or Type IV (delayed type) hypersensitivity. It also does not discuss the possible infectious complications from improper technique." ME



Tony Scianna is the associate editor of *MedEsthetics.*



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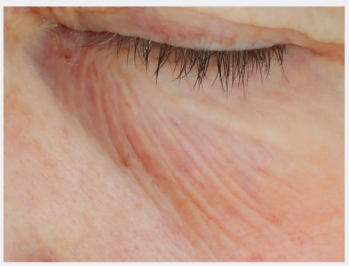

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