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THE GUIDE FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL AESTHETICS

Allured business media

November/December 2025
Volume 21, Number 8
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Closing 2025 with Clarity: From the Skin–Brain Axis to Neurotoxin Ingredient Awareness

In the November/December issue—our last issue in 2025—we're proud to announce the winners and finalists of *MedEsthetics*' first-ever Readers' Choice Awards. From top skincare lines to standout devices and innovations, these selections reflect the voices of our community.

We also dive into the emerging frontier of psychodermatology, exploring the intimate connection between our mental health and how it manifests on the skin. We interviewed the creators of XOMD—a skincare line designed to support emotional wellbeing alongside skin health. The formula uses botanicals like jasmine and carob to stimulate the skin's sensory system and promote an oxytocin-like response. This issue unpacks why treating the skin without addressing psychological wellness may be missing half the story in modern aesthetics.

Neurotoxin ingredient awareness is lacking among patients, too. As skincare consumers grow increasingly ingredient-conscious, the same level of awareness isn't extending to neurotoxin treatments, a new study reveals. But while neurotoxins on the market share a core mechanism, their purification processes, stabilizers and accessory proteins differ significantly—differences that may affect results and immune response. Ingredient transparency isn't just for topicals anymore—it's essential across the entire aesthetics spectrum.

Lastly, as merger and acquisitions activity is increasingly taking place among aesthetics and skincare brands, we laid out exit plans for medspa and practice owners in the industry over in the business consult section. Planning your exit is very important in an ever-evolving industry like aesthetics, even if you have no plans to transition in the near future!

Our last issue for 2025 is packed with impactful insights, new data and fresh takes. We hope you enjoyed 2025 as much as we did!

We'll see you in 2026.

Cheers,

Jamie O'Toole

*__Correction__: *In our October 2025 issue, we incorrectly stated that Tricoci Salon and Tricoci University were affiliated. The university was acquired in 2018. We regret the error.*

The holidays are around the corner...

What's your skincare offer?



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Martha Stewart has officially entered the medical-grade skincare space with the launch of **Elm Biosciences** on Sept. 17, a brand she co-founded with board-certified dermatologist Dhaval Bhanusali, MD. Backed by five years of research and support from 350 dermatology advisors, Elm introduces a dual-pathway approach to aging, combining the A3O Elemental Serum and Inner Dose Daily Skin Supplement to target both internal and external causes of skin aging. The serum uses a proprietary antisenescent antioxidant complex to address signs like UV damage and pigmentation, while the supplement combats internal triggers such as inflammation and oxidative stress.



SkinMedica, produced by Allergan Aesthetics, is updating its skincare line with a modernized, sustainable packaging redesign featuring a refreshed logo with copper accents and clear typography. Launching alongside the new look is the **HA5 Hydra Collagen Water Burst Moisturizer**, which combines five types of hyaluronic acid with plant-based prebiotics to hydrate and support the skin's microbiome and barrier for up to 24 hours. Approximately 90% of SkinMedica's packaging by weight, including all secondary cartons, will be recyclable, reducing landfill waste by 71%. This shift reflects growing industry efforts to combat plastic pollution amid the booming $354 billion-plus cosmetics market. The rest of the SkinMedica products will adopt the new packaging in 2026.



Nutrafol, a creator of nutraceuticals for hair growth and other conditions, has partnered with Major League Baseball (MLB) as its "Official Hair Growth Partner" in a multi-year deal announced Sept. 24. Starting with the 2025 postseason and continuing into the 2026 regular season, the partnership will celebrate hair health through the "Hats Off" campaign, highlighting baseball players removing their hats during exciting moments as a symbol of hair empowerment. Nutrafol will also earn NSF Certified for Sport status, assuring safe supplement use for athletes. The campaign includes testimonials from MLB "Hair Captains" sharing their hair growth journeys, and a sweepstakes offering fans a chance to win World Series tickets and a year's supply of Nutrafol.



Skin Pharm, a medical-grade skincare brand with 13 clinics mainly in southern U.S. states, opened its first Midwest location in Chicago's West Loop on Oct. 9. This 14th clinic will offer skin consultations and injectables, including their signature Gold Infusion treatment, which uses a micro-infusion tool to deliver vitamins and antioxidants beneath the skin tailored to individual concerns. Founded in 2017 by nurse practitioner Maegan Griffin, who was inspired by her own skincare experiences, Skin Pharm focuses on personalized treatment plans and facial rejuvenation. Although new to the Midwest, the Chicago clinic reflects the brand's Southern roots, with interior design by Nashville stylist Mrs. Paranjape.

Clockwise from top: Courtesy of Elm Biosciences Sept. 17 Press Release; Image by chukvitaly at Adobe Stoc; Courtesy of Skin Pharm; Image by AStakhivat Adobe Stock

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BUSINESS CONSULT BY TERRI ROSS



Exit on Purpose: How Practices Can Maximize Value in Acquisitions, Franchises, Successions and Mergers

The most valuable exits are planned years in advance. Learn the early steps that set successful medspa owners apart.

If you own a medical aesthetics practice, you shouldn't think in terms of "someday" regarding your exit strategy—you should design it in advance. The practices that command premium valuations and smooth transitions start building for the outcome they want long before a buyer, partner or successor ever approaches.

I've worked with business owners who sell for life-changing numbers and others who leave money on the table because their data around revenue is messy, operations aren't streamlined or the business is built around the owner's personal hustle.

According to the Exit Planning Institute State of Owner

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Readiness Survey[1], 83% of practice owners have no written succession plan, 60% of physicians said they would retire today if they could and 49% have done no exit planning at all. These sobering statistics highlight just how unprepared most owners are—yet also how much opportunity there is to differentiate yourself by getting exit-ready now. More importantly, these numbers underscore that without proactive planning, valuations can plummet, transitions can fall apart and owners risk losing the wealth they worked so hard to build.

I'll break down four common exit paths—acquisition, franchise, succession (family or internal) and IPO/merger—and the early decisions that make or break each one. I'll also highlight how failing to prepare beforehand can cause deals to collapse or valuations to sink dramatically, so you can de-risk now and keep your options open later.

When to Start Planning Your Exit

Ideally, the time to start preparing is five years out before you plan to exit. This gives you the runway to clean up financials, document processes and build the right professional support team. The three "must haves" are a strong CPA, an experienced legal team (specializing in mergers & acquisitions in healthcare) and an operations team (both internal and outsourced). Depending on your size, you may also want to bring in a wealth/tax manager and an investment banker. Together, this team demonstrates to buyers that you run a professional business and are measuring what matters.

Equally important is defining your goals and narrative, including:

- What makes your practice unique?
- What specific approaches or philosophies do you attribute to your practice's success?
- Where have you been, and where do you want to go?
- Why should someone invest in you?
- Why do you want to sell?

Ask yourself:

What is your ideal future post-sale? Do you want to stay long-term as an employee or do you want to wrap up as soon as possible? Remember, a typical exit takes years, and investors are investing in people as much as the business. Many will require lengthy employment agreements (on average 4–5 years). If your business can run independently of you, you'll have more leverage and may exit sooner.

Adopt an "Exit Now" Operating System

Whatever path you choose, sophisticated buyers and partners look for the same core five signals:

- Clean, defensible financials with at least 24–36 months of monthly P&Ls, normalized owner add-backs and clear service/retail/membership mix.
- Compliance and structure that respects corporate practice of medicine rules (see AmSpa CPOM Overview[2]) and uses an MSO/physician entity framework where required.
- Process-driven operations, including SOPs, training and KPIs, so performance is repeatable beyond the founder.



Image by ArLawKa at Adobe Stock/

To maximize valuation and ensure a smooth transition, owners should begin planning 5+ years before selling.



Operate your practice as if it's always for sale by maintaining clean financials, legal compliance and scalable systems.

- Scalable growth channels, such as membership/recurring revenue, retention and measured acquisition costs.
- Leadership bench (team members ready to step into leadership roles) beyond the owner, with incentives aligned to stick through a transition.

The aesthetic market is consolidating, and investor interest remains active—especially for larger, multi-site operators with recurring revenue and tight compliance. But according to the AmSpa 2025 Medical Spa State of the Industry Report[3], only a small percentage of med spas are actually private-equity-owned today, which means well-run independents still have leverage if they prepare. The common thread is if you neglect these fundamentals, your valuation will drop and your exit options will narrow.

Exit Path #1: Acquisition (Strategic or Private Equity)

What it is: You sell your practice to a strategic buyer (e.g., multi-site operator) or to a PE-backed platform. You may roll equity, stay on for a transition or exit fully depending on deal terms.

What buyers require (start early):

- **Financial clarity.** Segment revenue by provider, treatment category, location, memberships vs. one-time services and retail. Normalize owner compensation and non-recurring expenses.
- **Compliance and legal structure.** According to McGuire Woods Legal Considerations for Medical Spas [4], in CPOM states, your physician entity should own the medical side while your MSO provides non-clinical services via a properly drafted management services agreement (MSA).
- **People and contracts.** Button up employment agreements, restrictive covenants, medical director agreements, supplier contracts and lease terms (including assignment provisions).
- **Systems and data.** Demonstrate standardized charting, HIPAA-compliant records, OSHA training logs, device maintenance logs and marketing attribution dashboards.

Value accelerators:

- Membership revenue with low churn and high LTV/CAC.
- Multi-location footprint or documented playbook to open the next location(s).
- Injector productivity dashboards tied to training pathways and compensation.

Deal Killers I See (and How They Plummet Value):

- "Owner-centric" revenue where you, the founder, do the top 40–60% of injections without a succession plan—this creates buyer risk and drops multiples instantly.
- Non-compliant ownership or supervision structures in CPOM states—investors will either walk or restructure at a steep discount.
- Material revenue from off-label or poorly documented treatments; device usage with no service records—this can cause buyers to renegotiate or abandon deals.

Exit Path #2: Franchise (Becoming the Franchisor)

What it is: You package your brand and operating system so franchisees can replicate it under a Franchise Disclosure Document (FDD).

What franchisors require (start very early):

- A replicable model. Documented SOPs for every function.
- Brand standards. Naming, visual identity and patient experience checkpoints.
- Unit economics. Validate profitability in multiple markets.
- Legal readiness. FDD, operations manual, trademark protection and multi-state regulatory review.

Value accelerators:

- Piloted corporate clinics with reproducible KPIs.
- Franchisee training university.
- Membership engine and marketing playbook.

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Deal killers (and how they cut valuations):

- Franchising before validating unit economics across multiple locations—this exposes weakness and erodes credibility.
- Ignoring CPOM and state-by-state rules—non-compliance can unravel the model and make your franchise unmarketable.

Franchising amplifies your brand—but only if your model is turnkey. If you can't hand an operations team your playbook and see the same results 1,000 miles away, you're not ready.

Exit Path #3: Succession (Family or Internal)

What it is: You transition leadership and ownership to family members or internal leaders.

What successors require (plan 24–36 months ahead):

- **Leadership development.** Shift key relationships and decision rights gradually.
- **Legal and tax planning.** Structure buy-sell agreements, valuation and financing.
- **Incentives aligned to outcomes.** Profit interests, bonuses or equity tied to EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) and retention.
- **Documentation.** Same playbooks that make a business sellable also make it transferable.

Value accelerators:

- Multi-year mentoring with measurable milestones.
- Equity paths for key providers.

Deal Killers (and How They Erode Outcomes):

- Announcing succession and then taking the foot off the growth pedal—this causes revenue declines that tank valuation.
- Fuzzy or "verbal" buy-sell terms—these often blow up during closing and destroy continuity.

Checklist: Are You Exit-Ready?

- ☐ CPOM/MSO legal structure compliant in your state
- ☐ 3 years of clean, segmented financials
- ☐ Monthly close process with external review
- ☐ Documented SOPs for all operations
- ☐ Injector training and certification pathways
- ☐ Membership model with low churn
- ☐ Employment contracts + restrictive covenants
- ☐ Leadership bench in place
- ☐ Data room prepared (financials, legal,HR, compliance)
- ☐ Active growth momentum, not stalled performance

Exit Path #4: IPO or Merger into a Larger Platform

What it is: You merge into a larger operator, or—rarely—pursue a public listing.

What the market requires:

- Scale and governance. Multi-site footprint, professional board and audit-ready controls.
- Regulatory adherence. Bulletproof CPOM/MSO compliance.

Value accelerators:

- Ability to open and integrate clinics on budget.
- Shared services with measurable lift.

For independents, IPOs are rare. More often you'll merge into a PE-backed platform. But if governance and compliance aren't already in place, your valuation plummets and your seat at the table can just disappear.

To Recap

Exits don't fail because the market isn't interested—they fail because businesses aren't positioned. When you fail to prepare, valuations plummet, leverage disappears and options close. Operate like an asset that someone sophisticated will underwrite: compliant structure, clean financials, repeatable systems and a team that can carry the torch.

Remember, the best time to start is five years out. Use that time to assemble your professional team (CPA, legal, operations and advisors) while also defining your goals and your story. Ask yourself what makes your practice unique, why someone should invest in you and what your ideal post-sale future looks like. By doing this early, you'll give yourself maximum leverage, ensure a smoother transition and preserve the wealth you've worked so hard to build. ME

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OXYTOCIN FOR THE EPIDERMIS:

How Psychodermatology Is Turning Aesthetics into Emotional Medicine

Blending cutting-edge science with emotional wellness, two doctors are redefining skincare by tapping into the brain's feel-good chemistry—where beauty meets the biology of connection.

By Jamie O'Toole



Steven Dayan, MD

Facial plastic surgeon Steven Dayan, MD is probing beneath the face and looking at the interaction between mental health and skin conditions, referred to as psychodermatology. Working alongside dermatologist Sabrina Fabi, MD, the two set out to uncover how certain botanicals can elicit an oxytocin response, similar to the brain's natural mechanism, through topicals. Dayan and Fabi have created XOMD, a skincare product line that launched in 2025. The OX Factor formula, as the two describe, feels like a hug for your skin.

The Duo Behind Skincare That Targets Skin Health and Emotional Wellbeing to Redefine How We Treat Self-Perception in Aesthetics

Aesthetics, from Dayan's point of view, is more about how you feel and less about how you look, as below each patient's desire for symmetry and surface perfection is the need to feel confident and aligned with their self-perception. It comes at no surprise that one's perception of themselves and their stress levels play a large part in how the skin presents itself. But could skincare ingredients trigger the hormone that makes us feel good, while clinically treating the skin simultaneously? Dayan and Fabi say yes.

Fabi, a board-certified dermatologist practicing in San Diego, California, joined Dayan in 2022 before launching the XOMD OX Factor formula in 2025, including a cleanser, serum and moisturizer. Together, the two clinicians combine Fabi's knowledge in clinical dermatology, while Dayan weighs in his familiarity with the science of attraction, psychosocial wellness and its link to skin health.

"It is well established in the dermatology literature that skin disease is linked to mental health," he says. "For years we have known that we can inhibit neurotransmitters in the skin and prevent dermatologic disease and influence mood, so why have we not leveraged this knowledge for topical cosmetics?"

Dayan, who published the book *Subliminally Exposed*—exploring the logic behind why our appearances allow us to communicate and manipulate each other at a subconscious level, points to the fact that this area of dermatology is growing, and recent studies within the last two years reflect this focus on mind-body correlation, specifically its implication on skin health.



Jasmine derivatives have been studied for its ability to stimulate skin mechanoreceptors and mimic oxytocin-like effects.



The Missing Diagnosis: Why Treating Skin Without Addressing Mental Health Leaves Half the Story Untold

In 2023, it was estimated that approximately 30 to 60% of dermatologic conditions have psychiatric aspects, as the neuroendocrine and neuroimmune systems interconnect[1]. Psychiatry maintains this estimate in 2025, reporting more than one-third of dermatological patients have psychological concerns[2]. Yet, although dermatologists have an increased awareness about the psychological aspects of skin conditions, many mental health disorders that occur alongside skin conditions are still undiagnosed and left untreated, the study says[1].

Stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions have been shown to exacerbate inflammatory conditions such as psoriasis, eczema, acne and urticaria by dysregulation of neurotransmitter pathways. Neurotransmitters, including dopamine, serotonin, epinephrine and cortisol are essential in mood regulation and skin homeostasis[3], and oxytocin falls into the list of essential hormones, too.

"When your skin is healthy you feel healthy, when your body is healthy you feel healthy, and when your love life is healthy you exude healthiness, happiness, vigor and beauty; you glow, and this is at the basis of why we created XOMD," Dayan recounts.

How Jasmine and Carob in XOMD Tap Into the Skin's Sensory System to Boost Mood and Magnetism

XOMD, though its products do not artificially contain the oxytocin hormone, nor does it reach the neural pathways to transmit such a response, it uses two important botanicals

Image by Sciletti Alfio at Adobe Stock



Psychodermatology explores the link between mental health and skin, shifting aesthetics from surface-level to emotionally restorative.

to rather invite the "feel-good" hormone. Jasmine derivatives and carob-derived isobutyric acid are what drive a psychological response close to the effects of the natural hormone, Dayan says. Jasmine derivatives have been studied for its ability to stimulate skin mechanoreceptors and mimic oxytocin-like effects—promoting hydration, calm and radiance.

Volunteers in a 2022 study applied a cream containing jasminum grandiflorum extract at 2%, who were compared to a group of volunteers applying a placebo cream. After one month of use, people who used the formula with jasminum grandiflorum extract felt better overall, according to a wellness questionnaire. They also had higher levels of oxytocin in their saliva compared to those who used a placebo[4].

"Jasmine stimulates piezo sensory receptors in the skin to upregulate oxytocin receptors and support oxytocin activation," Dayan says. "Oxytocin, the love hormone, is unique in that of all the neuropeptides that reside in the skin, and there are many, oxytocin uniquely creates a positive feedback loop with the hormone releasing centers in the brain."

Ultimately, Fabi and Dayan concluded from their clinical trials, published in Wiley in 2024 , that jasmine works via the mechano-sensory receptors known as piezo1. The skin essentially transmits the sensation of touch to sensory neurons through the piezo1 mechanoreceptor found in the plasma membrane of epidermal keratinocytes and fibroblasts. This, in turn, stimulates the skin's wound healing process, modulating inflammation, tissue proliferation and scar formation as well as increasing oxytocin levels[5].

Carob-derived isobutyric acid, the jasmine's companion in this formula, is a compound found in natural copulins, known as sexually communicative chemicals, with pheromonal properties—contributing to enhanced intimacy and attraction. Carob is an evergreen tree belonging to the legume family in Western Asia and the Mediterranean basin.

Interestingly, the carob tree fruit emits a distinctive aroma that may mimic the chemical signals naturally released by females to indicate reproductive readiness. The trials conducted by Fabi and Dayan explain that copulins act as an important messenger or pheromone in primates[5]. Odorous and nonodorous chemical compositions within copulins can trigger behavioral and physiological responses in males, and this explains why this ingredient excites attraction from the individuals applying the OX Factor topicals, impacting their romantic lives, and in turn nurturing connections, touch and hugging that stimulate oxytocin.



Carob-derived isobutyric acid is a compound found in natural copulins, known as sexually communicative chemicals.

From top: Courtesy of XOMD; Image by Alexander at Adobe Stock



OX Factor uses jasmine and carob-derived botanicals to mimic oxytocin's mood-boosting effects.

Thirty-nine subjects demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in skin quality following four and eight weeks of use[5]. With 86% of subjects reporting increased confidence, product users found random people of the opposite sex to be more attractive 88% of the time and reported improvement in sexual satisfaction in 90% of the categories[5].

Building a Mood-Boosting Lifestyle Loop Through Targeted Topicals

Together, these ingredients work synergistically to address the skin–brain–social axis. "We all know the mood-elevating benefits of sitting in the sun," Dayan says. "Even though we disdain the long term negative benefits, there is no doubt everyone gets a mood boost when first in the sun; well, that works via the serotonin pathways in the skin."

Phospholipids, also found next to the duality of feel-good botanicals, are solely there to strengthen the skin barrier, reduce inflammation, support cellular membranes and soothe the skin. Fruit extracts are also incorporated, such as watermelon, grape and apple, as well as anti-oxidants to reduce redness, tyrosinase inhibitors to even out skin tone, polyphenols and flavonoids to support collagen growth and peptides to stimulate fibroblast.

"When oxytocin levels go up in the skin, it triggers the body to double down and release more oxytocin systemically…so we look at our formulation as a way to get a hug from your skin care," Dayan mentions.

Emphasizing that while these ingredients are meant to externally elicit an oxytocin response, this creates a loop, Dayan explains. As romantic satisfaction is shown to increase in the clinical studies, perhaps increasing the likelihood to conceive, Dayan says "if you feel good in general, it leads to lifestyle changes and a better way of living, which becomes habit forming in a good way; a positive feedback loop is created between living good and feeling good."

At the Core of Aesthetics Lies the Universal Desire for Confidence and Self-Acceptance

Aesthetic medicine is evolving as a field past the simplified increase in collagen and elastin, Dayan says, and more toward tapping into the influences of skin health, looking deeply at biological mechanisms and how our environment and social norms impact our external appearances and perception of self.

"Patients desire to look themselves but better… and we set out to prove we can meet the needs and desires of our patients as well as the sophisticated consumer; this is the future of all aesthetics, not just skincare: it is to improve people's lives, and that starts with skin care," Dayan says. ME

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Jamie O'Toole is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics.*

Courtesy of XOMD


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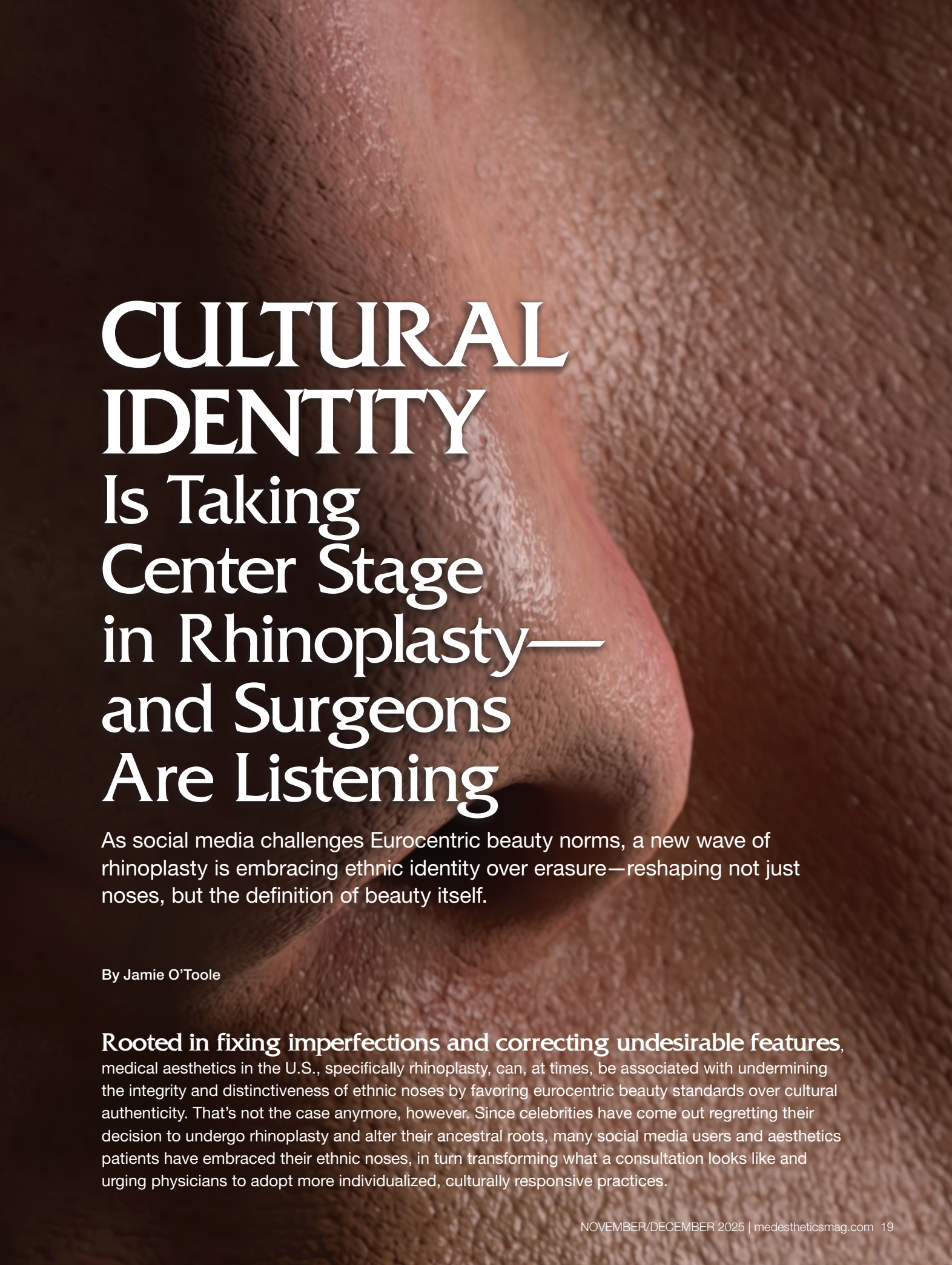

CULTURAL IDENTITY Is Taking Center Stage in Rhinoplasty—and Surgeons Are Listening

As social media challenges Eurocentric beauty norms, a new wave of rhinoplasty is embracing ethnic identity over erasure—reshaping not just noses, but the definition of beauty itself.

By Jamie O'Toole

Rooted in fixing imperfections and correcting undesirable features, medical aesthetics in the U.S., specifically rhinoplasty, can, at times, be associated with undermining the integrity and distinctiveness of ethnic noses by favoring eurocentric beauty standards over cultural authenticity. That's not the case anymore, however. Since celebrities have come out regretting their decision to undergo rhinoplasty and alter their ancestral roots, many social media users and aesthetics patients have embraced their ethnic noses, in turn transforming what a consultation looks like and urging physicians to adopt more individualized, culturally responsive practices.



How Social Media and Celebrities Are Shifting Perceptions of Ethnic Noses

When searching "ethnic nose" on the social media platform TikTok, there are videos of women turning to the side and showing the stark bridges of their unique noses, saying that they could never trade their lineage for an "upturned" nose. Some flaunt having a rhinoplasty, but hold with dignity the fact that they did not sacrifice their unique features, passed down from generations, in the making.

Model Bella Hadid also came out in 2022 during an interview with American Vogue saying that she regrets getting a nose job at 14-years-old, expressing, "I wish I had kept the nose of my ancestors." Anil Shah, MD, who wrote the book *Nosecentric* and specializes in rhinoplasty, says a decade earlier, his protocol of asking patients about their ethnicity in the consultation would've taken them aback, but now, in recent years, many are glad that he talks about the subject.

Surgeons Shift Toward Culturally Sensitive Rhinoplasty Techniques

"I, myself, have a diverse mixed background, including Italian, Indian and a few other things," Shah says. "Talking to patients about which identities they identify with really is a great way of getting this conversation started."

While rhinoplasties at times hold the notion that it disregards diversity, diverting people from the procedure altogether, there are certain functions patients want to change, regardless of ethnicity, including deviation. Within many ethnicities, too, there are, per se, more desirable features than others that don't necessarily mean westernized, but more symmetrical according to their genetic codes. More recently, liquid, or non-surgical rhinoplasties using filler have stood out, specifically for its implication on ethnic noses, to help define the nasal bridge, nasal tip and smooth small imperfections, all while maintaining the patient's unique features.

Many plastic surgeons understand this idea in regard to rhinoplasty, studying techniques that welcome ancestral noses without diminishing their composition. The first technique that surgeons highlight is the consultation process. Shah says a better consultation involves the surgeon asking about how the patient perceives their identity in a conversational manner, and less so in a clinical or interrogative fashion.

Adam Weinfield, MD, president of the Rhinoplasty Society, says rhinoplasty specific to noses of African descent will be a major focus at the society's annual meeting in May 2026, as this conversation becomes more prevalent. African-American patients, Shah says, are often a mix of many cultures, making their nose one of the most diverse and complex noses on the planet.

"Talking to patients about which identities they identify with really is a great way of getting this conversation started."

Weinfield, similar to Shah's experience, says patients are increasingly asking not to "westernize" their appearance, and that patients of Latin American ancestry, African ancestry or Asian and Middle Eastern ancestry, are making the distinction between wanting a better nose versus a different nose.

"A better nose is a version of their nose that retains that thick characteristics, but doesn't transform the appearance to one of a different ethnicity," he says.

Merging Technological Precision with Culturally Informed, Patient-Led Aesthetic Goals

Every great design starts with a blueprint or CAD drawing, Shah says. Once an image is established, Shah then interposes it with a patient's pre-existing nose and creates a series of calculations that create millimetric differences. Using advanced nasal reshaping tools, including ultrasonic rasps, he is able to precisely change patients' nasal shapes to closely match the design blueprint, whether it be surgical or through the use of filler. Since technology like this has advanced in recent years, allowing conversations around ethnicity to be distinct in the surgical chair, these tools enable surgeons to plan and visualize the surgical procedure with high precision based on a patient's unique anatomy.

Image by ergeniyasht19 at Adobe Stock



Surgeons are increasingly using customized techniques, like hybrid rhinoplasty and advanced imaging tools to enhance nasal features while preserving ethnic identity.

In the operating room, Weinfield credits the techniques of Eser Yuksel, who was a mentor to him, and also hybrid techniques, to preserving important features. When deciding how to approach an ethnic nose that doesn't correct, while addressing the features patients wish to fix, is by dividing regions of the nose in three parts. This is essential, as analyzing the nose as a single entity may neglect specific parts of the nose to prioritize cohesion, whereas separating into three parts, including upper third, middle third and lower third, can pinpoint what may be affecting the patient, whether it be breathing better or adjusting a specific curve, to blend into the overall integrity of the nose.

In 2012, Yuksel published a study in the Journal of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery[1], looking at the role of fat grafting in primary rhinoplasty, concluding that fat grafting can deliver the advantage of minimized dissection and improved skin quality. A hybrid approach, on the other hand, combines elements of structural rhinoplasty with dorsal preservation, and is particularly well-suited for ethnic rhinoplasty, Weinfield says. This is because it allows for highly customized adjustments to the dorsal shape, projection and the width of the upper two-thirds of the nose, "ensuring precise contour and width."

If a patient with a prominent dorsal hump—as seen in some Middle Eastern or Latino noses—wishes to reduce it but retain a small, subtle component of the hump, a hybrid preservation-structural approach makes this easier to achieve than either preservation rhinoplasty or open structural rhinoplasty alone, he explains.

"Another benefit of the hybrid method is the ability to precisely control the width of the nose, which may not be as feasible with preservation rhinoplasty by itself," he explains.

Filler And The Delicate Balance Of Beauty And Tradition

After distinguishing parts of the nose into three parts, Weinfeld says hyaluronic filler, a non-surgical liquid rhinoplasty technique, is another feasible option, and tends to be the most favorable for ethnic noses in particular. The process adds some volume to the nose and can disguise a hump by adding volume above and below it on the bridge of the nose or create more tip rotation by adding filler to the climb and the area beneath the tip. The procedure lasts up to six months, is not permanent and can temporarily add volume, enhance the tip of the nose, smooth out lumps, camouflage a bump on the bridge or straighten a slightly crooked nose[2].

What's important to note about liquid rhinoplasties is that it doesn't seek to narrow the nose or make it smaller—often associated with more western noses. In many cases, it can make the nose appear more symmetrical and that is all, hence its favorable profile. The procedure has become more dominant over the last decade, especially as new fillers have become FDA-approved in recent years.



If used sparingly, fillers can create some change in the nose without erasing ethnic character of the nose, Weinfield says. However, if fillers are maximized, they might have the negative effect of erasing ethnicity. The importance of moderation and artistry is an important principle, he says, when trying to avoid removing the ethnic character of a nose and making it look like the "ubiquitous western."

From top: Image by Pabizo Anatolii; michaelheim at Adobe Stock



"I never assume everyone from a certain identity wants the same nose. Beauty is individual, and ethnicity is only one part of making a nose a beautiful part of reshaping their face."

"That's why it is important to have a conversation about the patient's goals," he says. "The nice thing about fillers, though, is that as the patient is awake, you can incrementally show them the changes in a mirror real time and decide to add more if the patient desires more."

Skin type and cartilage size in rigidity have significant impacts on techniques, whether it be surgical or with filler. The thickness of skin in the African, some Middle Eastern, southeast Asian and even American noses can limit the amount of definition that can be created in the tip region of the nose. When dealing with the upper 2/3 of the nose, Weinfield says even people with thick skin will still respond to fillers, but when the skin of the lower third of the nose is extremely thick, that's where surgeons see some of the limitations of fillers and opt for surgical intervention.

Ethnicity Is Not One Size Fits All When It Comes to Nose Surgery

Middle Eastern patients, for example, are almost impossible to group in the category of Middle Eastern, Shah says. There's so many different ethnicities, tribes and countries, where patients can have a different perception of their nose, and how they ultimately want to look. Shah explains that factors like wearing a hijab, could actually impact how you reshape the nose.

"The hijab can be quite demanding in making sure a nose matches someone's face perfectly. East Asian patients often want the bridge taller, but a key aspect over here is making the bridge feel and look natural."

There's rhinoplasty surgeons who are still doing "cookie cutter" rhinoplasties, however, Shah says. Most surgeons still use chisels and prefer to create an overly scooped nose, he adds. Many surgeons also try to simplify what patients want by making the same type of nose for everyone, ignoring individual details and especially ignoring their identity.

"It's difficult to advise surgeons on how to create something beautiful, as it would be like instructing a sculptor to be Michelangelo," Shah says. "Making a nose appropriate and ethically responsible takes empathy to understand a patient's perspective, motivation by the surgeon and perhaps we'll use the word talent to create something beautiful, and technical skill to make the nose as ideal as possible."

Individual Beauty Begins with Listening and Respecting Identity

Weinfield's personal definition of the art of working with ethnic noses can be distilled to one word: "listen." He says the surgeon listens to the patient, who describes their values and individual definition of beauty, and the surgeon fulfills by knowing the right techniques that are necessary to create the patient's vision.

He recommends that those interested in performing rhinoplasty on patients from different ethnic backgrounds first spend a lot of time learning about rhinoplasty in general, including the anatomy and different techniques of closed and open structure and preservation. After listening to the patient, assembling a plan using the most pertinent techniques according to the patient's anatomy will achieve a result that they want, upholding the degree of ethnic character they described.

"I never assume everyone from a certain identity wants the same nose," Shah says. "Beauty is individual, and ethnicity is only one part of making a nose a beautiful part of reshaping their face." ME

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Jamie O'Toole is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics.*

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Lipedema Patients Commonly Seek Cosmetic Care BEFORE DIAGNOSIS—

Here's Why Early Recognition in Aesthetic Practice Matters

As lipedema defies traditional therapies, data reinforces the need for earlier recognition within aesthetic medicine, as misdiagnosis is common and symptoms become apparent in cosmetic settings.

By Jamie O'Toole

Minimally and non-invasive modalities have taken on a new role since the rise of GLP-1, addressing skin laxity and even introducing patients to aesthetics altogether. These devices are also seeing patients come in for relief of symptoms related to lipedema, unique in the way that it presents with disproportionate, resistant weight that defies traditional weight-loss tools, including GLP-1s and bariatric surgery.

While these devices fall short here, liposuction, a cosmetic procedure, remains the condition's only primary effective treatment, surpassing medical regimen. This underscores a critical need for aesthetic clinicians—not just plastic surgeons—to recognize the signs of lipedema early as studies show most patients are misdiagnosed or diagnosed by non-surgical medical providers—initially turning to cosmetic interventions, hoping to fix what they mistake for stubborn fat or cellulite.



Meet the Winners of the 2025 *MedEsthetics* Readers' Choice Awards

MedEsthetics is proud to announce the winners and finalists of its first annual Readers' Choice Awards.

The votes are in, and the results are official—MedEsthetics is proud to announce the winners and finalists of its first annual Readers' Choice Awards!

After weeks of voting, our readers have spoken, recognizing the top brands, products and innovations that are making a lasting impact in the medical aesthetics industry. From skincare breakthroughs to game-changing devices, these standout names represent the best of the best as chosen by those who know the industry best—you.

Thank You

TO OUR NOMINEES

Medesthetics would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our nominees. We were overwhelmed by the amount of innovation we are seeing in professional skin care products. We were honored to have you participate in our program and we cannot wait to see all the wonderful things you create in the future.

- Acclaro Medical
- Aerolase
- Avène
- Bio France lab
- Boulevard
- Canfield Scientific
- Colorescience
- Cynosure Lutronic
- Environ Skin Care
- Geneo
- Glacial Skin
- Global Beauty Private Label Skincare
- Good Molecules
- JuveXO
- K Headspa
- Lira Clinical
- LOCKrx
- Lumenis Aesthetics
- M.A.D Skincare
- Merz Aesthetics
- Neocutis
- PatientNow
- PDO Max
- Phorest Software
- RA Skin Care
- Sciton Neurotris
- Silagen
- Sinclair
- SkinSpirit
- SMART eXo
- Sofwave
- SomaCell
- SR Cosmetics
- TiZO
- Visha Skincare

2025 MedEsthetics READERS' CHOICE

Best Acne Device



WINNER

Aerolase Neo first launched in 2015 with widespread acclaim for its advanced 650-microsecond laser technology, which safely and effectively treats acne by targeting inflammation, bacteria and excess oil—all without damaging the surrounding skin. It is also the sister device to the Neo Elite, a next-generation advancement built on the trusted Neo technology. Designed for all skin types and tones, the Neo provides a gentle, no-contact experience with minimal discomfort or downtime, making it a favorite among both providers and patients.

aerolase.com

Best AI Software



WINNER

Recognized for its precision scheduling feature, **Boulevard** has revolutionized the way self-care businesses manage bookings. By leveraging artificial intelligence to analyze booking patterns, appointment durations and provider availability, precision scheduling transforms a traditionally manual, offline process into a seamless online experience—helping businesses maximize efficiency and revenue.

joinblvd.com

Best Acne Scar Treatment



WINNER

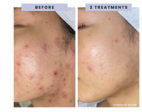
Silagen Acne Scar + Spot Corrector. This innovative formula combines medical-grade silicone with proven brightening and soothing ingredients to help reduce the appearance of post-acne marks and scars, including texture, hyperpigmentation and erythema. Praised for its effectiveness and ease of use, Silagen continues to be a go-to solution for patients and providers seeking clearer, more even-toned skin.

silagen.com

FINALISTS



Lira Clinical | Green Power | ***liraclinical.com***



SkinSpirit | Clear + Even Clarifier Catalyst Serum | ***skinspirit.com***

Best Brightening Product



WINNER

LúmEnvy Serum by PDO Max launched for at-home use in June 2025, bringing clinical-grade skincare into the daily routine, helping to visibly improve skin pigmentation, texture and hydration for a more luminous complexion. Powered by just five potent ingredients—salmon DNA, Centella Asiatica (plant exosome), hyaluronic acid, vitamin C and niacinamide—this powerful yet streamlined formula delivers professional-level results with less.

pdomax.com

FINALISTS



RA Skin Care | Pigmentation Solutions Oceanic Vitality Serum | ***rapigmentationsolutions.com***



Good Molecules | Discoloration Correcting Serum | ***goodmolecules.com***

Images courtesy of the manufacturers

Best Chemical Peel



WINNER

RA Skin Care Apple Wine Peel. This standout treatment combines wine extracts with L-malic and L-ascorbic acids to stimulate cellular turnover, boost collagen and elastin production and improve overall skin tone. Ideal for aging or photo-aged skin, the Apple Wine Peel delivers quick, visible rejuvenation—refining texture, softening fine lines and enhancing dermal firmness. A true favorite for those seeking radiant, refreshed skin!

rhondaallison.com

FINALISTS



Lira Clinical | Exo Mandelic | ***liraclinical.com***



M.A.D Skincare | Non-Resorcinol Peel | ***madprofessional.com***

Best Cryotherapy Thermo Device



WINNER

Cryokera is revolutionizing hair restoration with its groundbreaking Cryo-Infusion Technology, ditching damaging heat in favor of ice-powered precision that restores hair from the inside out. Cryokera deeply infuses moisture, protein and nutrients while preserving the natural integrity of keratin and essential proteins. The result? Stronger, healthier, more luminous hair—without heat damage or protein loss. It's a new era of mindful, science-driven hair care.

k-headspa.com

Best Dry Skin Product



WINNER

Environ Skin Care Vita-Complex Super Moisturiser is formulated with a blend of powerful moisturizers and emollients. This rich, nourishing cream supports the skin's natural barrier and boosts hydration levels to leave skin feeling soft, supple and refreshed. Ideal for combating dryness and restoring balance, the Super Moisturiser is a go-to solution for healthier, more resilient skin.

environskincare.com

FINALIST



Neocutis | Bio Cream Riche | ***store.neocutis.com***

Best Exosome Product



WINNER

The **SMART eXo Genesis** high-potency solution delivers over 200 billion premium exosomes packed with miRNA, designed specifically for hair and scalp health. By supporting cellular signaling and hydration, SMART eXo Genesis helps revitalize the scalp and create optimal conditions for hair growth and regeneration. Perfect for post-surgical care and combination therapies, it's a game-changer in advanced hair restoration.

smart-exo.com

FINALISTS



JuveXO Aesthetics | ***juvexo.com***



SR Cosmetics | Phyto Stem Cell Serum | ***srcosmeticsusa.com***

Images courtesy of the manufacturers

Best Eye Rejuvenation Product



WINNER

Colorescience Total Eye 3-in-1 Renewal Therapy SPF 35 is an all-in-one formula combining eye cream, sunscreen and concealer to target fine lines, dark circles and puffiness while providing broad-spectrum SPF 35 mineral protection. Clinically proven, it color-corrects pigmentation with a soft peach undertone and is available in four shades to suit a wide range of skin tones. In a four-week clinical study, 97% of participants reported their eyes looked and felt more rejuvenated, making Total Eye a standout choice for radiant, protected and youthful-looking eyes.
colorescience.com

FINALISTS



Visha Skincare | Advanced Bright Eye Booster | ***vishaskincare.com***



Avène | Retrinal EYES Advanced 3-In-1 Eye Cream | ***aveneusa.com***

Best Facial Contouring Device



WINNER

Sciton ProFractional works by treating targeted portions of skin to trigger a powerful healing response, dramatically improving texture, fine lines, deep wrinkles and scars. By creating microscopic channels, it stimulates the body's natural repair process, leading to significant skin rejuvenation. With customizable settings—from adjustable spot sizes to tailored coagulation and ablation options—ProFractional offers personalized treatments, making it a versatile leader in facial contouring.
sciton.com/profractional

FINALISTS



Neurotris | SX3800 | ***neurotris.com***



Sciton | Contour TRL | ***sciton.com***

Best Facial Device Experience



WINNER

Préime DermaFacial cutting-edge multi-technology platform combines five powerful treatments—microdermabrasion, microcurrent, radiofrequency, ultrasound and LED—to deeply cleanse, tone, lift and hydrate the skin. Designed to deliver both luxury and results, Préime DermaFacial offers a personalized, high-performance facial experience that's effective for all skin types and treatment stages, setting a new standard in advanced skincare.
sinclair.showpad.com

FINALISTS



Geneo | Glo2Facial | ***glo2facial.com***



Acclaro Medical | UltraClear Laser 3DMIRACL | ***ultraclearlaser.com***

Images courtesy of the manufacturers

Best Firming Product



WINNER

Neo Firm Neck Cream by Neocutis. This intensive anti-aging cream is specially formulated for the delicate neck and décolleté area. Packed with proprietary peptides, glycolic acid, stabilized vitamin C, beet root extract and hyaluronic-support ingredients, Neo Firm works to firm and smooth fine lines, brighten uneven skin tone and provide deep hydration—revealing a more youthful, tightened and radiant appearance.
store.neocutis.com

Best Hair Regenerative Treatment

WINNER

SMART eXo Pure + Juvasonic is a needle-free protocol that combines the power of SMART eXo Pure's potent exosomes with the advanced technology of Juvasonic, which temporarily opens the skin barrier to enhance absorption. Together, they deliver a synergistic approach to scalp revitalization—supporting cellular repair, stimulating visible hair growth and achieving next-level regenerative results in hair restoration.
smartsolutionsrx.com



FINALISTS



JuveXO | Hair | ***juvexo.com***



LOCKrx | Hair Health Nutraceuticals | ***lockrxhair.com***

Best Imaging Device



WINNER

Canfield Scientific's VISIA Facial Skin Analysis is powered by advanced AI that captures the highest-resolution, standardized facial images to reveal both surface and subsurface skin features with unmatched precision. From spots and wrinkles to UV damage and TruSkin Age, VISIA provides a comprehensive view of skin health. With powerful visualization tools, meaningful before-and-afters and targeted recommendations supported by the Industry Brand Library, VISIA helps practices communicate clearly, educate clients and drive real results.
canfieldsci.com

Best Laser Skin Resurfacing Device



WINNER

V-SERIES. At the heart of this advanced system is V-FR, which delivers customizable fractional radiofrequency treatments with minimal downtime. Featuring vacuum-assisted precision, adjustable pulse modes and integrated contact cooling, V-FR effectively treats wrinkles, scars, enlarged pores and uneven texture—across all skin types. This powerful yet versatile technology offers a comprehensive solution for skin resurfacing with both safety and results in mind.
sinclair.showpad.com

FINALISTS



Aerolase | Era | ***aerolase.com/era***



Acclaro Medical and UltraClear | 2910 nm Cold Fiber Laser | ***ultraclearlaser.com***

Images courtesy of the manufacturers

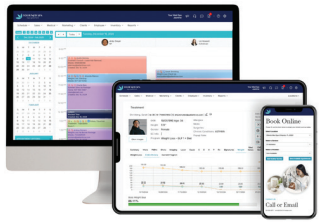


Best Light & Energy-Based Devices

WINNER

triLift by Lumenis Aesthetics is a non-invasive facelift solution that combines proprietary Dynamic Muscle Stimulation (DMS) technology to tone facial muscles, radiofrequency to boost collagen and reduce wrinkles and RF microneedling to restore volume and smooth skin texture. The result is a naturally lifted, youthful appearance—achieved without surgery or downtime. triLift offers a comprehensive, layered approach to facial rejuvenation, redefining what's possible with energy-based treatments.
lumenis.com

Best Medspa Practice Software



WINNER

PatientNow was designed specifically for medspas and aesthetic practices. It is an all-in-one EMR solution that streamlines scheduling, payments and reporting—while fueling growth with powerful automated marketing and patient engagement tools. From digital forms and online booking to membership management, PatientNow helps build lasting client relationships, all within a secure, HIPAA-compliant platform that simplifies and elevates daily operations.
patientnow.com

FINALISTS



Phorest | Software | ***phorest.com***



Boulevard | ***www.joinblvd.com***



Best Microneedling Mechanism

WINNER

Glowpin by PDO Max is an innovative airless pump system specifically designed to deliver topical skin boosters with precision and ease. Once the desired serum is loaded into the device, a simple press of the pump diffuses the product evenly onto the skin—enhancing absorption and treatment efficacy. With its user-friendly design and targeted delivery, Glowpin offers a seamless solution for elevating microneedling treatments.
pdomax.com

Best Neurotoxin

WINNER



XEOMIN by Xeomin and Merz Aesthetics is FDA-approved to treat upper facial lines—including forehead lines, frown lines and crow's feet. XEOMIN is a trusted solution for temporarily reducing the appearance of moderate to severe wrinkles. Known for its precision and purity, XEOMIN delivers natural-looking results that help patients look refreshed and rejuvenated without overcorrection.
xeominaesthetic.com

Images courtesy of the manufacturers

Best New Aesthetic Device



WINNER

AuraLux by Acclaro Medical is a sleek, next-generation laser system designed to prevent and correct common skin concerns through gentle, effective rejuvenation treatments. Featuring innovative CoolPulse technology, AuraLux optimizes energy to deliver impressive cosmetic results with comfort and minimal downtime. With a user-friendly interface and built-in guided treatment modes, it ensures safe, effective use across all skin types.
auralux.com

FINALIST



Glacial Skin | ***glacialskin.com***

Best New Skin Care Product



WINNER

Environ Skin Care RAD SHIELD Mineral Sunscreen SPF 30 is a mineral sunscreen that embodies Environ's core skincare philosophy—protecting and promoting skin health every day. Formulated to work in harmony with Environ's signature vitamin A products, RAD SHIELD offers broad-spectrum sun protection while supporting the skin's overall wellness. Lightweight, effective and designed for daily use, it represents a holistic approach to sun care that fits seamlessly into any skincare regimen.
environskincare.com

FINALIST



Avène | Retrinal 0.1 Intensive Multi-Corrective Cream | ***aveneusa.com***

Best Non-Invasive Facelifting Device



WINNER

triLift by Lumenis Aesthetics combines proprietary Dynamic Muscle Stimulation with radiofrequency and RF microneedling to tone facial muscles, boost collagen, reduce wrinkles and restore volume—all without surgery or downtime. By targeting the muscles, skin and structure in one powerful treatment, triLift delivers a naturally lifted, youthful appearance with visible, long-lasting results.
lumenis.com

FINALISTS



Merz Aesthetics | Ultherapy PRIME | ***hultherapy.com***



SomaCell | ***somacellskin.com***

Images courtesy of the manufacturers

Best Private Label Product



WINNER

CBD Skin Soothe Balm by Global Beauty Private Label Skincare is a high-potency balm featuring 1000 mg of full-spectrum CBD combined with calming botanicals and natural butters to provide soothing relief for compromised skin. Ideal for daily use on conditions like chronic dermatitis, eczema, rosacea, inflamed acne and dryness—or as part of a post-treatment regimen—CBD Skin Soothe Balm delivers potent care that your clients and patients will appreciate.
globalbeauty.net

FINALIST



Global Beauty Private Label | ULTRA TINT SPF 30 | ***globalbeauty.net***

Best RF Device



WINNER

V-SERIES is a modular, multi-technology platform featuring five specialized radiofrequency handpieces designed to address a wide range of aesthetic skin concerns. FDA-cleared for treating wrinkles and improving the appearance of skin laxity, V-SERIES delivers powerful, non-invasive results with minimal to no downtime. Suitable for all skin types and built with future-ready expandability, it's a versatile solution for today's—and tomorrow's—aesthetic needs.
sinclairnorthamerica.com

FINALIST



Cynosure Lutronic | XERF | ***cynosurecanada.com***



Best Scar Reduction Device

WINNER

The **UltraClear 2910 nm Cold Fiber Laser by Acclaro Medical** uses fiber laser technology and is designed to treat virtually all types of scars—whether from acne, trauma, burns or surgery—across all ages and skin tones. With precise skin targeting that minimizes pigmentation risk, UltraClear delivers fast, effective results while improving skin texture and tone. Its versatility and speed make it a powerful solution for reducing visible scars and helping patients regain confidence in their skin.
ultraclearlaser.com



FINALIST

Sciton | ProFractional | ***sciton.com***

Best Scar Reduction Product

WINNER



The Silagen Scar Refinement System is a physician-exclusive line featuring medical-grade silicone products clinically designed to prevent and treat both new and existing scars. The collection includes Silagen 100% Pure Silicone Gel and Silagen Silicone Gel + SPF 50, combining the proven power of silicone with essential UV protection to help prevent hyperpigmentation. Silagen offers a customizable, comprehensive approach to scar care for every patient and every scar.
silagen.com

Images courtesy of the manufacturers

Best Sensitive Skin Product

WINNER



SkinSpirit Clear + Even Clarifier Catalyst Serum was specifically formulated for acne-prone and sensitive skin. This innovative serum features anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, plant-based phytonutrients that help calm redness and reduce breakouts. Designed to elevate microneedling treatments, Clear + Even supports clearer, smoother and healthier-looking skin. It's a game-changing solution for those seeking gentle yet effective care for even the most reactive skin.
skinspirit.com

Best Skin Care Supplements

WINNER



Silagen Arnica Bromelain Complex helps accelerate the resolution of bruising and swelling. This powerful supplement supports faster recovery and reduced downtime for patients. With a blend of Arnica montana, bromelain, grapeseed extract, high-potency vitamin C, zinc and rutin, it works to move stagnant fluids and clear bruised areas more efficiently. What sets it apart is the inclusion of diosmin and hesperidin in a clinically proven 9:1 ratio to help strengthen blood vessels and optimize healing.
silagen.com

Best Skin Regenerative Product



WINNER

Glo2Facial by Geneo treatment combines four powerful technologies—including oxfoliation and non-invasive RF Pro—to stimulate collagen, heal the skin and promote total skin regeneration. Designed to build skin integrity from within, Glo2Facial delivers visible results through a luxurious, multi-sensory experience. It's the perfect blend of science and self-care, helping providers deliver on the promise of real regeneration and radiant, healthy skin.
glo2facial.com



FINALIST

Merz Aesthetics | Radiesse | ***radiesse.com***

Best Skin Tightening Treatment



WINNER

Sofwave harnesses the power of SUPERB ultrasound technology, stimulating the body's natural production of collagen, elastin and hyaluronic acid—making it a true triple threat against the signs of aging. Sofwave delivers non-invasive lifting and tightening for the neck, brow, jawline and arms, while also improving wrinkles, cellulite and acne scars. It's a cutting-edge solution redefining what's possible in skin rejuvenation.
sofwave.com

FINALIST



SomaCell | ***somacellskin.com***

Images courtesy of the manufacturers

Best Sun Protection Product



WINNER

TiZO AM Replenish Lightly Tinted SPF 40 is a multitasking mineral sunscreen that combines broad-spectrum protection with advanced skincare benefits, featuring Zinc Oxide to shield against UV damage, ceramides to restore the skin's lipid barrier and powerful antioxidants Vitamins C and E to help repair and defend against environmental stressors. With a lightweight tint for a natural finish, TIZO AM Replenish delivers lasting hydration while preventing and correcting sun-induced skin damage. ***tizoskin.com***

FINALISTS



Environ Skin Care | RAD SHIELD Mineral Sunscreen SPF 30 | ***environskincare.com***



Sunforgettable | Total Protection Face Shield Flex SPF 50 | ***colorescience.com***

Most Essential Post-Treatment Skincare Product



WINNER

Skin Rehab Growth Factor Plus by RA Skin is an advanced recovery serum featuring the highest concentration of epidermal growth factors in the RA line, making it a go-to for post-procedure healing. With chondroitin to reduce inflammation and discomfort, and a powerful botanical complex to enhance cellular communication and boost collagen synthesis, Skin Rehab Growth Factor Plus supports faster recovery, improved skin strength and optimal post-treatment results. ***raskinrehab.com***

FINALIST



Bio France Labs | Cryo Freeze Globes | ***retailbiofrancelab.com***



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DETAILS BY JUSTIN HOUMAN, MD



Where Hormones Meet Appearance: A Urologist's Guide to the Hidden Drivers of Male Aesthetics

Male aesthetics are often the visible endpoint of complex interactions between metabolism, hormones and fertility—factors too often overlooked in clinical care.

When men think of "aesthetic outcomes," they often imagine muscularity, lean body composition, healthy skin and youthful vitality. But what many don't realize is that optimizing aesthetics isn't just about gym time or supplements, but rather deeply rooted in underlying health, hormonal balance and fertility status. As a urologist specializing in men's health, I see every day how medical conditions shape not only how a man feels, but how he looks.

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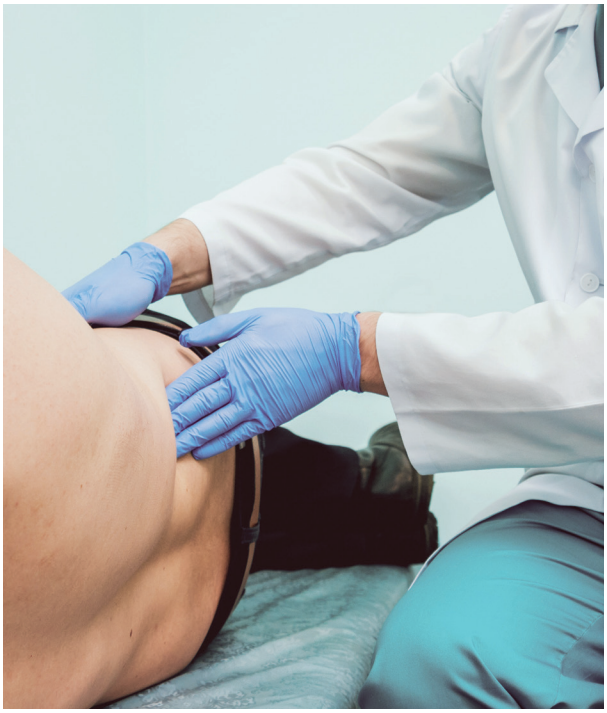

Male aesthetics, muscle, skin and vitality are often driven by hormonal balance and metabolic health, not just workouts.

How Medical Conditions Influence Aesthetics

Metabolic Health

Conditions like obesity, diabetes and metabolic syndrome are some of the strongest drivers of poor male aesthetics. Elevated insulin and chronic inflammation promote fat storage, particularly in the abdomen, while reducing lean muscle. These same processes lower testosterone levels, leading to gynecomastia (male breast enlargement), reduced facial hair density and diminished energy for exercise.

Cardiovascular Disease and Blood Flow

Erectile dysfunction is often the first sign of vascular disease, but poor circulation also affects muscle recovery, skin health and even hair. Diminished nitric oxide signaling doesn't just impact performance, it can blunt the vibrancy and physical edge that many men seek.

Hormonal Disorders

Low testosterone, pituitary dysfunction or thyroid imbalances are often overlooked when men struggle with body composition despite disciplined workouts. Suboptimal testosterone impacts muscle protein synthesis, bone density and fat distribution, often leaving men with a softer, less defined appearance.

Fertility as a Window Into Aesthetics

Semen quality isn't just about family planning, it's also a biomarker for male health. Poor sperm counts often correlate with low testosterone, obesity and metabolic dysfunction. Men with higher fertility potential tend to display stronger secondary sexual characteristics: lean muscle, energy and vitality.

The Hormone-Aesthetic-Fertility Triad

Male hormones and fertility are not isolated systems, they are interconnected with aesthetics in several key ways:

- **Testosterone:** Drives muscle development, fat distribution, libido and confidence. Low T manifests as fatigue, sarcopenia (muscle loss), abdominal obesity and a prematurely aged look.
- **Estradiol (derived from testosterone):** Essential for bone health and body composition; too much conversion leads to fat gain and breast tissue growth.
- **DHT (dihydrotestosterone):** Enhances beard growth and body hair but in excess contributes to male pattern baldness.
- **Spermatogenesis:** The testicles require a healthy hormonal environment; when fertility falters, so do many aesthetic markers of vitality.

Supplements: A Double-Edged Sword

Many men turn to over-the-counter supplements for aesthetic enhancement, creatine, testosterone "boosters," fat burners, and hair-loss remedies. While some have evidence-based benefits, others may be inappropriate or even harmful depending on a man's health background.

Testosterone Boosters

- **Who may benefit:** Men with mild, age-related declines in testosterone may feel improved energy.
- **Who should avoid:** Younger men pursuing fertility. Many herbal or prohormone-based "boosters" can disrupt natural testosterone production, suppress sperm counts or interfere with pituitary signaling.

Hair Growth Medications & Supplements

Agents like finasteride can improve hair density but may alter DHT metabolism, sometimes leading to sexual side effects. Not every man tolerates this trade-off, particularly those already struggling with libido or fertility.



From top: Image by romaset; Ara Armoko at Adobe Stock

Fat Burners and Stimulants

Products containing caffeine, synephrine or yohimbine may transiently boost fat loss. But in men with hypertension, cardiac disease or anxiety, they pose serious risks, ranging from arrhythmia to panic attacks.

Creatine

Evidence supports creatine as safe and effective for muscle growth, but men with underlying kidney disease should avoid it, as creatine metabolism places extra demand on renal clearance.

Collagen and Skin Health Supplements

Collagen peptides can enhance skin elasticity and joint support, but if men expect them to "reverse aging" without addressing underlying sleep, diet and hormone health, they'll be disappointed.



Why "More" Isn't Always Better

The supplement aisle tempts men with the promise of shortcuts, but unregulated dosing, hidden ingredients and interactions with existing medical conditions make them a minefield. What enhances aesthetics in one man may compromise fertility, hormones or cardiovascular health in another. For example:

- A supplement that raises testosterone may simultaneously lower sperm count.
- A fat burner that trims the waistline could spike blood pressure.
- A hair-loss pill may cost a man his libido.

This is why a personalized, physician-guided approach is essential, especially for men in their reproductive years or those with chronic conditions.

The Clinical Takeaway

A man's muscle tone, skin quality, hair and vitality, are not cosmetic afterthoughts; they are reflections of his underlying health. When evaluating aesthetics, we must look through the lens of metabolic status, hormonal balance, cardiovascular fitness and fertility. As a rule of thumb when considering aesthetic treatments:



Supplement shortcuts promise gains but hide risks that can harm hormones, fertility or heart health.

- **Prioritize baseline health first:** sleep, diet, strength training, stress reduction.
- **Screen for underlying disease:** check testosterone, thyroid, cardiovascular risk and fertility status when appropriate.
- **Select supplements carefully:** evidence-based, condition-appropriate and under medical supervision.

True male aesthetics are built on health. Shortcuts that ignore underlying conditions often backfire, undermining not only appearance but also longevity, fertility and quality of life. ME



Justin Houman, MD is a nationally recognized urologist and Assistant Professor of Urology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, specializing in Men's Health, Male Fertility and Sexual Medicine. As a fellowship-trained expert, he is committed to optimizing men's well-being through state-of-the-art, evidence-based treatments for erectile dysfunction, testosterone optimization, Peyronie's disease and reproductive health. His patient-first approach integrates cutting-edge medical advancements with holistic lifestyle strategies, ensuring personalized, comprehensive care tailored to each individual.

Houman completed his medical training at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles before advancing his expertise at UCLA, home to one of the nation's top programs in Male Reproductive Medicine and Surgery. There, he mastered microsurgical and minimally invasive techniques for male infertility, hormone management and complex urologic conditions.

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FDA Approves Obagi Saypha MagIQ, Marking Waldencast's Entry Into U.S. Dermal Filler Market

Obagi Medical enters the dermal filler market with its first FDA-approved injectable, marking a new chapter for Waldencast.

As of Sept. 10, the FDA has approved Obagi saypha MagIQ, a hyaluronic acid gel injectable. The injectable stands out as the first product in the Obagi Medical brand collection, and since Waldencast's acquisition of the Obagi brand in 2022, this approval indicates the company's entry into the U.S. HA dermal filler market.

The global dermal filler market, reports predict, is projected to grow from 5 billion in 2025 to 8 billion by 2032[1]. Looming in the shadow with this entry to the HA filler market, Waldencast plans to leverage Obagi Medical's network of aesthetic professionals, who this filler pertains to, to unify the brand's medical-grade skin care products, per a Sept. 10 press release.

The commercial launch for this filler is planned for 2026, and Obagi is also seeking approval for its saypha ChIQ.

"This milestone represents an exciting advancement in our long-term strategy to become the world's leading dermatological megabrand at the crossroads of skincare and medical aesthetics with the addition of a comprehensive integrated aesthetic solution that builds upon Obagi Medical's efficacious skincare products," said Michel Brousset, co-founder and CEO of Waldencast.

Obagi saypha MagIQ was developed by Croma-Pharma GmbH. Croma-Pharma, based in Austria, manufactures hyaluronic acid products and other aesthetic mechanisms. Applying Macro Core Technology, Obagi HA filler creates a 3D HA matrix, the release states, to provide natural-looking results with consistent gel distribution and a predictable injection force.

"With the introduction of its Macro Core Technology, Obagi saypha MagIQ offers a differentiated approach to the dermal filler category, providing healthcare practitioners with new options to address the unique needs of their patients," said Suzan Obagi, MD, chief medical director of Obagi Medical.

To discover the filler's safety profile and move on to seeking FDA approval, Obagi conducted a U.S. Nasolabial Fold study. The study included 270 patients, who were followed for 48 weeks from initial treatment. The study concluded that the product met primary and secondary endpoints of non-inferiority, with representation of Fitzpatrick Skin Types I, V and VI.

Dermatologist Jeremy Green, MD was an investigator for the NLF study, who declared that the Obagi saypha MagIQ demonstrated smooth and consistent injection properties. "This product allows practitioners to achieve precise, natural-looking results while delivering high patient satisfaction with its effectiveness and longevity," he said. ME

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Jamie O'Toole is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics*.

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Contact: 877-746-4407, inductiontherapies.com



THAILAND EMERGES AS AESTHETIC MEDTECH POWERHOUSE AMID COUNTRY-WIDE AGING BOOM

A report by medical device company Pure Global highlights Thailand's rapidly growing medical device import market, driven by surging demand for aesthetic procedures and elder care. As Thailand moves toward becoming a "super-aged society" by the early 2030s, with over 20% of its population aged 65 or older, the need for devices related to non-communicable diseases is increasing. The "General & Plastic Surgery" segment—especially aesthetic procedures—is now the country's largest medtech import category, reaching $883 million in 2024, up from $624 million in 2021. Thailand is also a top destination for cosmetic medical tourism, with an estimated 60% of medical tourists seeking such procedures.

AI WORKFORCE AUTOMATES ROUTINE MEDSPA TASKS TO ENRICH THE BEAUTY EXPERIENCE

Zenoti, an AI-powered growth platform for medspas and beauty businesses, has launched AI Workforce—a suite of specialized AI agents designed to automate routine tasks like booking, marketing and dispute resolution. Built on insights from over 30,000 businesses in 50 countries, the agents act as digital team members rather than just tools, allowing staff to focus on personalized client experiences. Each AI agent has a distinct role: from answering calls and scheduling appointments, to analyzing client interactions, managing leads, creating targeted campaigns, transcribing consultations and handling payment disputes. This shift aims to boost efficiency and enhance customer care.

DERMALOGICA SECURES FDA CLEARANCE FOR FIRST-EVER MEDICAL DEVICE



Dermalogica has received FDA clearance for its first-ever medical aesthetics device—the PRO Pen Microneedling System—marking a milestone for the skincare-focused brand. Announced on Sept. 10, the class II device will be distributed in the U.S. starting in 2026, aligning with rising consumer demand for minimally invasive treatments. Dermalogica's entry into the device space reflects the growing connection between skincare products and aesthetic technology, as microneedling enhances the delivery of serums and active ingredients.

CUTERA'S RESIDENCY PROGRAM PREPARES FUTURE DERMATOLOGISTS WITH CLINICAL TRAINING



Cutera has launched its Residency Program to expand access to its FDA-cleared AviClear 1726 nm laser, integrating it into dermatology training programs across North America. Announced on Sept. 24, the 24-month initiative provides hands-on clinical education for treating mild to severe acne, while also offering research opportunities to help future dermatologists diversify their credentials. Beyond acne, residents will explore the laser's potential in treating other sebaceous-related conditions like sebaceous hyperplasia and hidradenitis suppurativa. The program includes exposure to Cutera's full technology portfolio and encourages collaboration, publications and clinical presentations. With applications now open, Cutera aims to advance dermatologic education and innovation by equipping the next generation of clinicians.

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Patients Are Lacking Awareness of Neurotoxin Ingredients, Despite Growing Use of Injectables

A new study reveals patients aren't nearly as ingredient-savvy when it comes to neurotoxins—despite key differences in their formulas that could impact results.

Amidst skincare companies incorporating some of the most powerful skin ingredients on the market right now, including PDRN, peptides and collagen boosting agents, the water has gotten murky with all of them claiming to do the same but with very different ingredients, purification processes and formulations. This has sparked education from brands and attentive research from patients; however, the same caution does not extend to neurotoxin ingredients for patients, a new study finds.

Neurotoxins like Daxxify, Letybo and Botox, to name a few, currently lead in the non-surgical aesthetics market[1], and while these are FDA-approved medical treatments, lending a level of trustworthiness and efficacy with a regulation process in place, these injectables—echoing similar intentions, have widely different purification and ingredient profiles, and may yield distinct results depending on the skin type its applied to.

Talker Research, on behalf of Revance, released survey results suggesting there's a lack of knowledge for neurotoxin ingredients, in comparison to the consciousness patients possess when determining what's in their SPF and serums. Talker Research is a market research and public polling company that works with brands and agencies to gather insights. They surveyed 2,000 U.S. adults aged 30–54 who currently receive, or intend to receive a neurotoxin treatment for frown lines within the next six months.

Presented in a Sept. 23 press release, Talker's survey reveals that 91% of respondents are more ingredient-aware today than in the past. Fewer than half, though, could recall any one ingredient in an available neurotoxin treatment on the market and 53% mistakenly believe all neurotoxin formulations are "more or less the same."

Skincare and supplements have made ingredient transparency routine, says Krysha Mallari, a board-certified nurse practitioner at Body+Beauty Lab, but neurotoxins are often presented without much explanation. Many patients are surprised to learn that bacteria are the source of several trusted medicines, she adds. Insulin, for example, is produced with E. coli, and vaccines, such as tetanus, are created from inactivated bacterial proteins.

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Not all neurotoxins are the same, although they share the same core mechanism. This medical product is derived from bacteria, as Mallari explains, specifically clostridium botulinum, a form of food poisoning. In its purified form, it is used cosmetically for wrinkles. With this in mind, brands purify and stabilize neurotoxins in diverse ways, which can affect how the product performs.

"Some companies strip away most of these proteins, leaving only the active molecule, while others retain them, which matters because accessory proteins may influence how the immune system responds," Mallari says. "A 'purer' formulation may reduce the chance of developing resistance over time."

Most respondents did not recognize that human or animal-based ingredients are common in many treatment formulations, while 36% said they chose their current frown line treatment because it was "the most obvious option." About 32% were unaware that alternatives exist.

"Understanding these differences empowers patients to make informed choices and helps providers match the right product to the right treatment goal," Mallari says, highlighting the need for more patient education. "The more the industry invests in research, education and clear communication, the more trust patients will place in these treatments."

Patients may, admittedly, value skincare ingredients more so than ones in injectables with assumed medical trust, but 61% said they'd switch to a different frown line treatment based on its formula. "Consumers have become increasingly ingredient-savvy when it comes to what they put on and in their bodies and it's time that same curiosity extends to aesthetic treatments," stated Jeff Bedard, founder of Revance. ME

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Jamie O'Toole is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics.*

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation
(Act of August 12, 1970); Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code)

1. *Publication title:* MedEsthetics
2. *Publication number:* 24336
3. *Filing date:* 9/29/2025
4. *Issue frequency:* Monthly; except Feb., Jun., Aug. & Dec.
5. *Number of issues published annually:* 8
6. *Annual subscription price:* Free
7. *Complete mailing address of known office of publication:* 336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403
8. *Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business offices of publishers:* Same
9. *Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher and editor:* Allured Business Media, 336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403, Managing Editor: Jamie O'Toole, 336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403
10. *Owner:* Allured Business Media, Janet Ludwig, Jeb Gleason-Allured, George Fox, 336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403
11. *Known bondholders, mortgages and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortages or other securities:* None
12. *Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates.) The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:* Not applicable
13. *Publication title:* MedEsthetics magazine
14. *Issue date for circulation data below:* September 2025
15. Extent and nature of circulation

	Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months	Number of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date
A. *Total number of copies (net press run):*	3,608	1,453
B. *Paid and/or Requested circulation:*		
1. *Mailed outside county*	3,571	1,428
2. *Mailed inside county*	0	0
3. *Distribution outside the mail*	1	0
4. *Distribution by other classes mailed through the USPS*	0	0
C. *Total paid and/or requested distribution*	3,572	1,428
D. *Nonrequested distribution*		
1. *Outside county*	0	0
2. *Inside county*	0	0
3. *Distribution by other classes mailed through the USPS*	0	0
4. *Distribution outside the mail*	0	0
E. *Total nonrequested distribution*	0	0
F. *Total distribution*	3,572	1,428
G. *Copies not distributed*	36	25
H. *Total*	3,608	1,453
I. *Percent paid and/or requested circulation*	100.00%	100.00%

16. *Publication of this Statement of Ownership:* Will be printed in the November/December 2025 issue of this publication.
17. *Signature and title of editor, publisher, business manager or owner:* Samantha M Attebery, Audience Development Manager

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Allured Business Media
1-630-653-2155
336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D
Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403 USA
www.Allured.com

MedEsthetics (ISSN 1937-2140) is published monthly (except February, June, August, & December) by Allured Business Media - 336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403. Periodicals Postage paid at Carol Stream, IL and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to MEDESTHETICS, Attn: Audience Development, 336 Gundersen Drive, Suite D, Carol Stream, IL 60188-2403. Give both the new and old addresses. Allow two months for change to become effective.

Subscriptions: Subscribe online at www.medestheticsmag.com.

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