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Beauty's New Benchmark
with Nurse Jamie

- The Evolution of Skin Care
- Korean Skincare Influence
- Social Media in Aesthetics

ADVERTORIAL



Acne Treatment, Reframed. Why Sebaceous Control Is the Foundation, and What Aerolase's Clinical Evidence Demonstrates.

Aerolase® 30 YEARS FORWARD

For decades, acne management has operated within an antibacterial framework including, topical antimicrobials, oral antibiotics, and surface exfoliation anchored by the assumption that suppressing Cutibacterium acnes is sufficient to control disease. The AAD guidelines continue to recommend benzoyl peroxide, topical retinoids, topical antibiotics, and oral doxycycline as first-line therapy.[1] The clinical consequence is familiar: patients cycle through agents, achieve transient improvement, and return with recurrence.

The contemporary pathogenesis model is multifactorial, with sebaceous hyperactivity positioned as the most clinically actionable upstream driver.[2,3] Androgen-driven sebum overproduction creates the follicular environment that permits keratinocyte obstruction, supports C. acnes proliferation, and elicits the inflammatory response visible at the lesion level. Recent microbiome research has reframed C. acnes' role: bacterial burden is not significantly different between acne-prone and healthy skin, what differs is phylotype composition. Virulent phylotypes (notably IA1) are overrepresented in acne lesions, biofilm formation is more frequent, and these strains preferentially trigger TLR-mediated innate immune activation within the pilosebaceous unit.[4,5] But the variable that most powerfully governs whether the cascade activates is sebaceous output.

The strongest evidence for this hierarchy comes from pharmacology. Isotretinoin and hormonal therapy, the two most powerful interventions in acne, both act primarily on sebum.[3] Antibiotic regimens, which act on bacteria and inflammation while leaving sebum untouched, produce the recurrence pattern that defines so much of clinical practice.

This is the clinical premise behind the Aerolase Neo Elite, which has acquired one of the deepest evidence bases for any energy-based acne modality: a double-blind RCT, a prospective clinical evaluation, a 50-dermatologist real-world field survey, a resistant-case series, and a combination protocol with low-dose isotretinoin.

MECHANISM OF ACTION

TThe sebaceous gland is an active immunoregulatory organ, not a passive lipid factory — producing hormones, neuropeptides, antimicrobial peptides, and pro- and anti-inflammatory mediators.[6] Therapeutic modulation acts simultaneously on lipid output and on its role in the dermal inflammatory environment.

The Neo Elite delivers 1064nm Nd:YAG energy in a 650-microsecond pulse: long enough for therapeutic dermal penetration, short enough to minimize epidermal thermal diffusion — the basis of its safety profile across all Fitzpatrick skin types.[7] Three coordinated effects follow: photothermal heating normalizes sebaceous output; thermal energy within the follicular unit disrupts C. acnes without antibiotic exposure; and vascular coagulation suppresses the inflammatory environment sustaining lesion activity.[8] All three occur from the same wavelength and pulse profile, without separate device parameters, a single treatment engaging the full pathogenic triad.

THE CLINICAL EVIDENCE

Foundational RCT. Kesty and Goldberg's 2020 double-blind RCT demonstrated 75% GAGS improvement in the laser-treated cohort at three months versus 25% in the sham group.[8]

Prospective evaluation in moderate to severe disease. In Dr. Saedi's study, 23 patients (57% moderate, 39% severe acne) across Fitzpatrick II–VI over five treatments at two-week intervals.[9] Median lesion count reduction reached 84% at end of treatment and 87% at the 90-day follow-up — continued improvement after the final session, consistent with sustained sebaceous downregulation rather than temporary suppression. IGA improved from 3.2 to 1.2 by

Active Acne



Photo Courtesy of Nina Harry, FNP-BC

Active Acne



Photo Courtesy of Zoe Flor, DNP, FNP-C

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week six with no regression through follow-up. Patient satisfaction reached 95% at 30 days; patient-reported self-esteem improved from 35% to 90% by week six.[2]

Real-world evidence at scale. The ASLMS field survey aggregated outcomes from 50 Neo Elite users (46 dermatologists), 90% with ten or more years treating acne, 48% having treated more than 200 acne patients on the platform.[10] Efficacy was consistent across severity: 73% of respondents report 60–80%+ lesion reduction in mild acne, 72% in moderate, 62% in severe (chi-square p = 0.3786 — no significant difference). Ninety-two percent rate it as effective as or better than other energy-based devices; 82% as effective as or better than topical retinoids.

Resistant cases. 10 Fitzpatrick I–IV patients who had failed standard regimens; meaningful clearance was achieved in three to seven sessions.[11]

Combination with low-dose isotretinoin. Dr.Gold's protocol produced 70.3% reduction in inflammatory lesions and a GAGS improvement greater than 5.5 points — both modalities acting additively on sebaceous output.[12]

TOLERABILITY AND SAFETY

Median VAS pain score was 2.0, with 76% of patients in the 1–3 range; 66% of respondents report fewer than 10% non-compliant patients.[10] For adolescent populations, where compliance attrition has constrained procedural options, this is a meaningful finding.

On safety: post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation has been the rate-limiting concern for energy-based treatment in Fitzpatrick IV–VI patients. The 650-microsecond pulse duration minimizes epidermal thermal accumulation, enabling calibrated fluence by skin type.[7] Various studies have separately documented the platform's skin-of-color safety profile across multiple indications.[7]

SKIN-OF-COLOR SAFETY: A MECHANISM-DRIVEN ADVANTAGE

The safety profile across Fitzpatrick skin types is not incidental, it is a direct consequence of the 650-microsecond pulse architecture. Conventional Nd:YAG platforms operating in the millisecond range deposit thermal energy over a duration that permits lateral diffusion into the epidermis, creating a meaningful risk of dyspigmentation in melanin-rich skin. The 650-microsecond pulse sits below the thermal relaxation time of the epidermis while remaining above that of the therapeutic targets; the sebaceous gland and microvasculature. The result is selective dermal heating with minimal epidermal thermal accumulation, enabling the clinician to titrate fluence to skin type without the dyspigmentation ceiling that has historically constrained energy-based acne treatment in darker phototypes. This is not a workaround or a modified protocol for Fitzpatrick IV–VI patients — it is the same treatment, with the same mechanism, calibrated to the same therapeutic endpoints.

ANCILLARY OUTCOMES

Beyond lesion clearance, improvement in post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation and erythema (90%), acne scarring (82%), skin tone and texture (80%), reduced oiliness (70%), and visible skin tightening (52%) was seen. The 70% reporting reduced oiliness is the clearest real-world signal of sustained sebaceous downregulation — consistent with the durable 87% lesion reduction at 90 days.[9]

ADDRESSING POST-INFLAMMATORY SCARRING

The international consensus supports fractional ablative and non-ablative platforms as standards of care for atrophic scar remodeling.[13] The Aerolase Hybrid Fractional Lens delivers fractional ablation with controlled thermal renewal for scar architecture and dermal remodeling. Used in sequence with the Neo Elite, a practice can manage the full clinical arc of acne beginning with the active disease through post-inflammatory sequelae, on a single platform.

MANAGING THE FULL ACNE ARC ON A SINGLE PLATFORM

As we've all known, acne is rarely presented as a single clinical problem. The active disease phase of inflammatory papules, pustules, nodules eventually resolves, incompletely, into a sequelae phase defined by post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation, persistent erythema, and atrophic scarring. These are not separate conditions requiring separate referrals or separate devices; they are stages of the same pathological process in the same patient. The Neo Elite's ancillary outcomes data reflects this reality: 90% of respondents reported improvement in PIH and erythema alongside lesion clearance, and 82% reported improvement in acne scarring, outcomes generated not by a separate protocol but by the same 650-microsecond 1064nm treatment targeting active disease.[1]

For deeper atrophic scar remodeling, the Aerolase Hybrid Fractional Lens extends the platform's capability: fractional ablation with controlled thermal renewal addresses scar architecture and dermal collagen reorganization at a structural level. The clinical and operational implication is clear: a practice equipped with both modalities can manage a patient from first breakout through full skin restoration without routing them to a separate device, a separate provider, or a separate treatment philosophy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE TREATMENT PARADIGM

The evidence supports positioning the Neo Elite not as adjunctive, but as a primary therapeutic modality: efficacy across severity tiers, durability through 90 days and beyond, safety across Fitzpatrick skin types, tolerability suited to adolescent populations, and a mechanism that addresses sebaceous output, bacterial proliferation, and inflammation in a single coordinated treatment.

The patient pattern that defines so much of clinical acne practice recurring breakouts on otherwise adequate regimens is a downstream consequence of treating bacteria without treating sebum. Treating sebum is what the Neo Elite was engineered to do.

Moderate Acne



Photo Courtesy of Dr. Z Teo

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CONTENTS

July/August 2026 | Volume 22 | Number 5

RESEARCH

30 From Correction to Regeneration:
Joshua Eferighe
The Evolution of Skin Brightening and Tightening

38 What It Actually Takes to Scale a Telehealth Program Without Cutting Corners
Dr. Sean Arora

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

12 Business Consult The Next Generation of Aesthetic Surgery
by Alexander Zuriarrain
Innovations in Devices and Surgical Materials

14 How Does This Quiet Workhorse Ingredient Support Wellness?
Gloria Lu and Victoria Fu

18 How to Convert the Consultation Your Patient Already Started on Social Media
Terri Ross

38 Spotlight
by Joshua Eferighe
What Obagi's $460M Acquisition Signals for the Future of Medical Aesthetics

Cover image courtesy of Alma Laser



IN EVERY ISSUE

4 Editor's Eye On The Industry

6 Introductions

46 Aesthetic Insights

47 Newsmakers

48 Advertiser Index

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

SPONSORED

8 Beauty's New Benchmark
with Nurse Jamie
Alma Laser

24 The Next Lift:
Keith Loria
How Non-Surgical Rejuvenation Is Redefining Facial Aging

COMPLEMENTARY CARE

35 Product Roundup
Holistic Skincare

MedEsthetics

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Beyond the Surface



Skincare has evolved beyond appearance-driven results to prioritize total skin health.

The skin is the largest organ in the human body. It's the first thing we see in the bathroom mirror when we wake up. It helps regulate our body temperature while we sleep. It's our public relations manager—the most visible asset we have.

Which is why it's no surprise that the global professional skincare market is projected to grow by $4.22 billion between 2024 and 2028.

While skincare and wellness have always been staples of the aesthetics and beauty industry, patient demand has shifted from solely appearance-driven results to outcomes rooted in clinical skin health. The evolution is evidenced not only in private equity's growing interest in clinical skin brands, but also in the technologies, devices and ingredients now shaping the market.

MedEsthetics' July/August issue tackles all things skin—from at-home technology innovations and pigmentation, to melasma solutions, tightening treatments and brightening techniques.

In this issue, experts discuss the latest energy-based devices and ingredients supporting hydration, barrier strength and long-term skin health, as well what the journey from scar to scar-free can realisticly look. We also explore the continued rise of Korean skincare, its influence on aesthetics today and how providers are adapting to meet the growing consumer demand.

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A NEW CHAPTER ON ACNE SCARS



At 12 weeks of treatment,
83% of patients
have reported smoother skin, reduced redness, and lightened brown spots with ReTex-5™ Technology



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K-beauty–inspired wellness and skincare brand, Rael, announced launch of two science-backed hydrogel masks on On June 8, 2026: **The Cryo Soothing Hydrogel Mask and the Glutathione + Vitamin C Brightening Hydrogel Mask**.

Both products bring cutting-edge Korean skincare technology to U.S. consumers at a time where popular terms in Korean beauty like glass skin and dewy glows are experiencing a significant increase in online searches and social media presence.

While cryo cooling masks in the U.S. typically require a 2-step rubber mask process, Rael's Cryo Soothing Hydrogel Mask delivers the same cooling and de-puffing benefits in a single, familiar step, delivering hyaluronic acid, peptides, and mushroom extracts.

Similarly, opposed to brightening treatments with serums or standard sheet masks, the Glutathione Brightening Hydrogel Mask delivers glutathione (a hero ingredient in Korean skincare) alongside vitamin C and tranexamic acid in one effortless hydrogel step, on the same anti-slip grip material. The sheet shifts from light yellow to transparent as its 34 grams of brightening essence absorbs.

LiveLoveSpa is officially Synchrony's first eCommerce partner in the cosmetic space to offer a seamless apply and checkout experience with CareCredit through the consumer financial services company Shopify. LiveLoveSpa is an online store and community created to inspire healthy living by connecting consumers and professionals to beauty and wellness products and experiences. Announced June 3, 2026, the move to expand financing options to its customers comes as global eCommerce sales are forecasted to hit $6.4 trillion in 2026, with an expected market growth of over $7.89 trillion by 2028 and estimated 22.5% of retail purchases taking place online. It's a shift already evidenced in the cosmetic space, as online sales now represent 41% of beauty and personal care sales in the U.S. — a 7.3% year-over-year value in growth across the global sector.

LIVE LOVE SPA

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PIGMENT MAGNET

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BEAUTY'S NEW BENCHMARK

with Nurse Jamie



The aesthetics industry has always been shaped by cultural shifts, but few have transformed the conversation as profoundly as K-Beauty. What began as a fascination with Korean skincare routines, innovative ingredients, and the pursuit of "glass skin" has evolved into something much bigger: a complete shift in how patients think about aesthetic treatments, aging, prevention, and skin health. Patients are becoming less interested in dramatic transformations and more focused on preserving skin quality, supporting collagen, and maintaining healthy skin over time. The result is a new era of aesthetics...one influenced as much by wellness and longevity as it is by beauty itself.

What began as a skincare movement has quietly become one of the most influential forces shaping the industry, changing not only the products patients use, but the treatments they seek and the outcomes they value.

Few aesthetic experts have had a front-row seat to that transformation quite like Nurse Jamie. Known for her work with some of the most photographed faces in entertainment, fashion, and media, including Kate Hudson, the Kardashian family, and Jessica Alba, Nurse Jamie has spent years observing how beauty standards evolve long before they become mainstream. What she's seeing today isn't simply another trend cycle. It's a meaningful shift in patient priorities,

Images courtesy of Alma Laser

driven by a growing appreciation for prevention, skin health, and results that appear effortless rather than obvious.

"It's less about transformation and more about healthy looking skin," says Nurse Jamie.

At the center of this shift is daily maintenance, a culture and philosophy of prevention that Korean beauty embraced years ago: healthy skin isn't something you repair, it's something you protect.

The K-Beauty Effect

Long before skin quality became one of the most discussed topics in aesthetics, Korean beauty culture was built around the concept of maintenance. Daily sun protection, hydration, collagen support, gentle treatments, and consistency were prioritized over aggressive correction. While many Western beauty trends focused on covering, correcting, or reversing visible concerns, K-Beauty focused on preserving healthy skin before damage occurred.

That philosophy has become increasingly aspirational in North America, fueled by the global fascination with Korean beauty culture and the pursuit of luminous, healthy-looking skin. In many ways, patients embraced K-Beauty long before they realized they were embracing an entirely different philosophy of aging.

"K-Beauty is built around prevention," says Nurse Jamie. "In the US, we've traditionally been much more corrective, we're more about fixing it once it's broken. We wait until the damage appears and then try to reverse it. Korean beauty approached it differently from the beginning. The goal was always maintaining healthy skin before the concern develops."

That philosophy has quietly become one of the most influential forces in modern aesthetics. Patients who once focused primarily on wrinkles are now paying attention to skin texture, luminosity, pore visibility, hydration, and overall skin health. The popularity of terms like glass skin, skin cycling, skin longevity, and collagen banking reflects a broader movement away from perfection and toward optimization.

"The whole skin quality movement is really the K-Beauty philosophy catching on here. I think K-Beauty gave people permission to think differently about aging. Instead of asking, 'How do I fix this?' they're asking, 'How do I keep my skin looking healthy?' That subtle shift has influenced everything from skincare routines to the technologies practitioners are bringing into their practices," says Nurse Jamie.

The influence extends well beyond skincare. Today's patients aren't waiting for a reason to begin treatment, they're approaching aesthetics as an ongoing investment in their skin, much like fitness, nutrition, or overall wellness. It's a subtle but meaningful shift that has redefined both patient expectations and the role aesthetic treatments play in modern self-care.

"What's changed isn't just the age of the patient, it's their modern approach and long-term mindset," says Nurse Jamie. "They're treating skin health as a lifestyle, not a one-time intervention, and that's changing the way they approach aesthetics altogether."

The New Status Symbol

In many ways, healthy skin has become beauty's ultimate fountain of youth.

In a world of high-definition cameras, social media, video calls, and constant visibility, patients are becoming increasingly aware that skin is always on display. While makeup trends come and go, healthy skin remains relevant regardless of age, style, or season.



Images courtesy of Alma Laser





"Your skin is the outfit you wear every single day," says Nurse Jamie. "You can't take it off and you can't swap it out. People are treating their skin with the same intention they bring to their health and wellness. It's no longer an afterthought, it's a priority."

The rise of the clean girl aesthetic, minimalist beauty routines, and natural-looking enhancements has only accelerated the movement. Rather than aspiring to look dramatically different, many patients are now pursuing what Nurse Jamie describes as undetectable beauty… results that are visible, but never obvious.

"I think great skin has quietly become the new status symbol," she says. "That effortless look only works when the skin underneath is genuinely healthy."

As aesthetics continues to intersect with wellness, patients are increasingly seeking treatments that support the quality and integrity of the skin itself. The conversation has expanded far beyond the antiquated term of anti-aging and evolved into something more comprehensive: skin health, longevity, and confidence.

Rise of Prevention

One of the most significant shifts Nurse Jamie sees in practice is the growing interest in collagen banking.

Rather than waiting for visible signs of aging to appear, patients are investing earlier in treatments designed to support collagen and maintain skin resilience over time.

"Patients are treating collagen like a savings account," she says. "They're building reserves now, so they have more to draw on later."

This preventative mindset has fueled demand for technologies that support skin quality while fitting into modern lifestyles. Rather than seeking dramatic interventions, many patients are choosing treatments that help maintain healthy skin year after year.

Technology Inspired by K-Beauty

As Korean beauty philosophies continue to influence global aesthetics, many of the treatment approaches gaining traction in North America today have long been embraced throughout Asia. One of the most notable examples is treatment stacking, the concept of addressing multiple layers of the skin through complementary technologies rather than relying on a singular modality.

"What's happening in Korea right now is all about treating skin at multiple depths," says Nurse Jamie. "You're not focusing on a single layer. You're supporting the skin from deeper structures all the way to the surface."

If K-Beauty philosophy is the foundation of today's skin quality movement, Alma's TitaniumLift, a treatment protocol originating in Korea, may be one of its most compelling clinical expressions in the aesthetic setting. The treatment has generated significant excitement throughout the industry, not simply because of where it came from, but because of how closely it aligns with what modern patients are seeking. Its arrival also reflects the growing virality among North American practices for Korean treatment philosophies that prioritize deep dermal heating and proactive skin maintenance over aggressive intervention.

"Having originated in Korea, it's no surprise that this approach aligns with K-Beauty's longstanding focus on skin quality," explains Nurse Jamie. "K-Beauty has always emphasized brightening, tightening and sculpting, which I personally refer to as BTS."

Images courtesy of Alma Laser



Built around the concept of multi-depth treatment and deep dermal heating, TitaniumLift embodies a more comprehensive approach. For Nurse Jamie, the excitement reflects something much larger than a single treatment. It represents a broader evolution in aesthetics.

"One of the things I appreciate about Alma is that the technologies are designed around how we actually practice today," says Nurse Jamie. "TitaniumLift reflects the philosophy of improving the appearance of skin quality, while Alma Harmony allows me to customize treatments for everything from pigmentation and vascular concerns to improving the appearance of texture and tone, and supporting collagen stimulation."

One-Size-Fits-All Aesthetics

While trends influence patient interest, Nurse Jamie believes personalization remains one of the most important components.

As one of the industry's most versatile aesthetic platforms, Alma Harmony allows practitioners to address a broad range of skin concerns through a single system. Instead of viewing pigmentation, redness, texture, and vascular concerns as separate conversations, Harmony allows practitioners to approach them as interconnected components of overall complexion health.

"Skin quality is rarely one issue," she explains. "It can be pigmentation, redness, texture, vascular concerns, or often several of those at once."

With technologies capable of addressing pigmented lesions, vascular concerns, skin rejuvenation, texture irregularities, and collagen stimulation, Alma Harmony allows practitioners to create customized treatment protocols tailored to individual patient needs. Rather than moving patients between multiple devices, practitioners can build comprehensive treatment plans from a single platform, combining technologies such as Dye-VL, ClearLift, and ClearSkin to address multiple dimensions of skin quality simultaneously.

"We're past the era of one-size-fits-all aesthetics," says Nurse Jamie. "Patients expect treatments to be as personalized as their skincare routine. Harmony gives me the flexibility to create protocols around the individual, not the skin concern, and that's a much more modern way to practice."

That personalization extends across Alma North America's portfolio. Whether improving skin quality with Alma Harmony, embracing the Korean-inspired approach influencing TitaniumLift, or helping patients achieve laser hair reduction with Soprano, the common thread is creating technologies that support individualized care and fit naturally into modern aesthetic practices.

For nearly two decades, Soprano has helped define the laser hair reduction category around the world. Having treated more than 18 million people globally, it has become one of the most recognized and trusted technologies in aesthetics, a reflection of patients' growing preference for treatments that combine efficacy, comfort, and convenience. Like the broader shift happening across aesthetics, Soprano reflects today's skin-first mindset, where beauty is effortless and the best treatments become part of your lifestyle, not your schedule.

A New Definition of Beauty

Beauty standards will continue to evolve. Trends will come and go. Technologies will advance.

What appears to be lasting, however, is a broader shift in how patients define beauty itself…not as perfection, but as health; not as transformation, but as maintenance; and not as a single treatment, but as a long-term skin health roadmap.

"We're moving toward undetectable beauty," says Nurse Jamie. "The goal isn't for people to know you've had something done. The goal is for them to think you look effortlessly beautiful and never quite know why."

In many ways, K-Beauty didn't simply introduce a new category of products or treatments. It changed the conversation entirely. And as aesthetics continues to evolve, that influence can be seen everywhere; from the products patients use at home to the technologies aesthetic practitioners use in treatment rooms every day.

For Nurse Jamie, that's not a trend. It's the new benchmark.

Images courtesy of Alma Laser

BUSINESS CONSULT BY ALEXANDER ZURIARRAIN



The Next Generation of Aesthetic Surgery

Innovations in Devices and Surgical Materials

Aesthetic surgery is undergoing a paradigm shift. Advancements in technique, technology, biomaterials, and pharmacology are fundamentally transforming the field. Outcomes that are faster, safer, and more individualized are now achievable, surpassing prior limitations.

Historically, aggressive and resective techniques dominated the specialty. Today, there is a decisive shift toward tissue preservation and restoration with an emphasis on long-term function, vascular preservation, and authentic, natural aesthetics.

Modern patients are well-informed and have unparalleled access to information. This has led to a preference for natural-looking results with minimal downtime.

This alteration is driving innovation across both surgical techniques and technologies to meet patient demand, setting the stage for key technical and material advancements.

Advancements in Surgical Techniques

Recently, tissue-preserving approaches have gained prominence, as seen in preservation-based breast augmentation techniques such as Preservé by Motiva. These methods are less invasive and present a lower risk of complications.

Motiva implants combine a cohesive, shape-retaining gel with a smooth, biocompatible outer shell designed to minimize complications. These implants use a flowable gel that adapts to the body's position in real-time.

Deep-plane facial techniques involve releasing and mobilizing facial fat pads and underlying musculature, rather than solely excising the skin as in traditional facelifts. By operating within the plane of the superficial muscular aponeurotic system (SMAS), these approaches produce results that are both more durable and anatomically appropriate.

These methods maintain native ligamentous structures, blood supply, and innervation.

Alloclae provides a non-invasive alternative to autologous fat grafting that does not require donor-site liposuction. This ready-to-inject collagen-based filler is suited for lean patients or those seeking subtle and smooth volumetric facial, hand, breast, buttock, and hip enhancement. In contrast to fat transfer, Alloclae eliminates the need for fat harvesting, making the treatment process more efficient.

Collectively, these innovative procedures result in improved healing and recovery, more natural movement and feel, and potentially longer-lasting outcomes. These surgical

Image courtesy of Alexander Zuriarrain

advancements dovetail with progress in devices and energy-based technologies.

Innovations in Devices & Energy-Based Technologies

The integration of energy-based devices—including radiofrequency, helium plasma, and CO2 laser technology—has expanded the surgeon's ability to achieve skin tightening and address soft tissue laxity with greater precision. In select patients, these modalities obviate the need for more invasive excisional procedures.

Technologies such as subdermal RF and ablative resurfacing allow for customized, multimodal treatment plans by offering adjustable energy depths, targeting different skin layers, and combining mechanical and thermal effects to address multiple concerns in a single session. These technologies can be used together or sequentially to optimize results, enhance collagen production, and reduce recovery time compared to traditional methods.

Next-Generation Surgical Materials

There is increasing adoption of biologic scaffolds, which provide an inductive microenvironment promoting constructive remodeling in complex wounds, breast reconstruction, and abdominal wall repairs.

- **GalaFLEX:** Is a bioabsorbable, monofilament scaffold mesh used to support, reinforce, and lift soft tissues.
- **Acellular Dermal Matrices (ADM**): are sterile, decellularized scaffolds derived from human or animal skin, used in reconstructive surgery to support tissue regeneration and repair.

These adjuncts provide structural reinforcement of soft tissues and enhance the durability of surgical outcomes, particularly in breast and body contouring procedures. This represents a shift toward materials designed to integrate with native tissue rather than merely replace it.

Biologics & Regenerative Medicine

Biologics are increasingly playing a significant role in medical aesthetics.

- **Platelet-rich plasma (PRP):** Utilizes a patient's own blood-derived growth factors to trigger natural tissue regeneration, collagen synthesis, and vascularization.
- **Exosomes:** Act as potent, non-invasive messengers that trigger cellular repair and regeneration.
- **Autologous Fat Grafting**: provides a natural, completely biocompatible method to restore volume, contour the body, and rejuvenate skin using the patient's own fat.

All of these modalities enhance tissue quality, promote healing, and improve long-term outcomes. Fat grafting is evolving from a volumizing technique into a regenerative tool, reflecting a broader trend in the field.

Safety & Recovery Optimization

Safety is advancing through enhanced recovery protocols and therapies such as IV, red light, compression, cryotherapy, massage, and hyperbaric oxygen. Advances in anaesthesia prioritize patient comfort, minimize perioperative pain, reduce systemic toxicity, and accelerate postoperative recovery.

Improvements in minimally invasive adjuncts such as robotics, imaging, energy devices, and digital tools aim to reduce complications, accelerate recovery, and improve overall outcomes, while lowering costs and enhancing the patient experience.

This progress generally allows for shorter downtime, reduced complication rates, and safer outpatient procedures.

Personalization & Patient-Centered Care

A collaborative, patient-centered approach now predominates, with treatments tailored to each individual's anatomy, preferences, and genetic profile. This has catalyzed a movement toward highly individualized treatment plans that integrate both surgical and non-surgical modalities.

Technologies such as AI-driven 3D imaging, computer vision, and machine learning analyze facial anatomy and patient data to predict outcomes. This is being used to tailor procedures based on anatomy, goals, and lifestyle.

Future Outlook

In the future, patient demand will likely continue to focus on natural, long-lasting outcomes with minimal downtime. This ongoing shift may drive further development of tissue rejuvenation techniques and reduce reliance on temporary fillers as the integration of surgery, technology, and regenerative medicine advances.

Surgeons may increasingly face the challenge of choosing from a broader range of surgical and non-surgical treatments, including the need to formulate individualized treatment plans. This likely entails combining multiple approaches, personalizing care to fit each patient's lifestyle and aging goals, and adopting AI-assisted planning and imaging.

The primary aim moving forward will likely be to optimize outcomes while minimizing trauma. This could mean replacing aggressive surgeries with minimally invasive procedures, prioritizing tissue preservation, using regenerative medicine for better healing, and integrating technology to increase precision and enable individualized results.

HOW DOES THIS QUIET WORKHORSE INGREDIENT SUPPORT WELLNESS?

Gloria Lu and Victoria Fu, cosmetic chemists and co-founders, Chemist Confessions

Wellness and skincare are converging as consumers increasingly seek holistic solutions that address both physical appearance and overall wellbeing. The global skincare market is projected to reach $187.68bn by 2026, with sensitive skin now reported by 71% of consumers across 18 countries — a 55% increase over the past two decades. This shift is driving demand for gentle, science-backed solutions that support the skin barrier and adapt to stress and environmental factors. Wellness is now inseparable from beauty, with consumers prioritizing longevity, mind-body balance, and rituals that foster emotional comfort.





Image by Jacob Lund at Adobe Stock

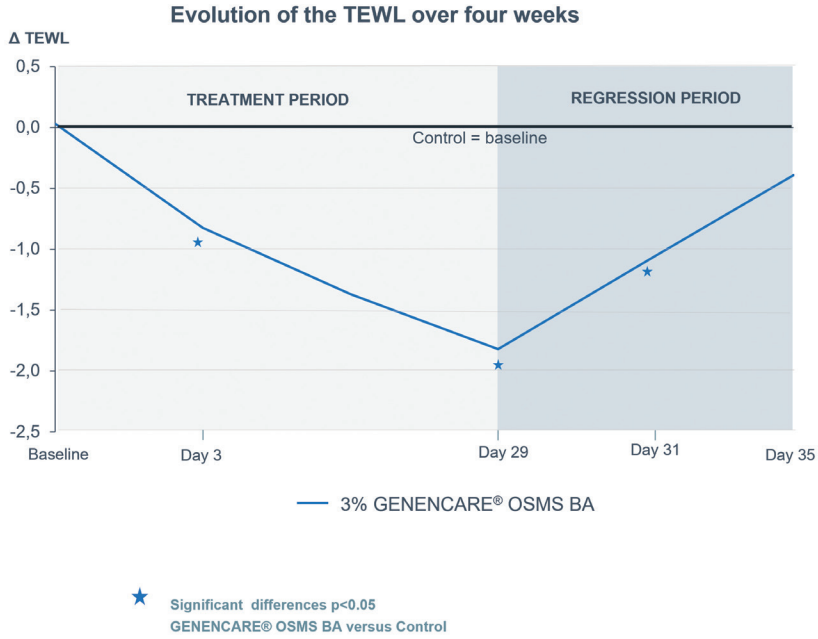

Gloria Lu and Victoria Fu

Why skin comfort (and barrier care) is being revisited

Skin barrier care is not a new concept. It has long been a foundational principle in skincare. What's changing is the context: consumers are navigating more variables at once, including frequent cleansing, stronger actives, environmental exposure, and an ongoing stream of "viral" beauty advice. As a result, many routines are shifting "back to basics," prioritizing comfort, resilience, and consistent feel over constant correction.

When skin feels out of balance, common sensations such as tightness, dryness, and sensitivity can lead consumers to adjust routines frequently: adding, swapping, or layering products in search of relief. Over time, this trial-and-error behavior can complicate routines and reduce confidence in what's working. In contrast, when skin feels comfortable and steady, consumers are more likely to stick with routines that feel supportive and reassuring.

This is where "quiet workhorse" ingredients play a meaningful role: rather than chasing headline intensity, they help support the everyday conditions that make a routine feel dependable.



What is Betaine?

Betaine (trimethylglycine) is a naturally occurring compound found in many living organisms and widely used in personal care. In cosmetics, it is commonly sourced from sugar beets. Betaine is also classified as an osmolyte — a type of ingredient associated with helping cells manage water balance under environmental stress.

Unlike classic humectants that primarily attract and hold water at the skin surface, osmolytes are often discussed in terms of supporting hydration balance in response to environmental stressors like dryness or stress. In cosmetic formulations, it helps maintain both short- and long-term moisturization while contributing to improved skin comfort and feel. Crucially, its benefits extend beyond hydration alone.

Clinical and instrumental data reinforce betaine's role in barrier support. In a four-week in-use clinical study conducted by International Flavors & Fragrances (IFF), daily

[1] WGSN Future of Skincare 2026
[2] WGSN Key Trend 2026/27: Beauty is Wellness

Figure 1: IFF's Betaine (GENENCARE® OSMS BA) reduces skin TEWL over 4 weeks of daily use, contributes to strengthening skin barrier and protecting skin from dehydration

Images courtesy of the authors



application of a betaine-containing cream led to a significant reduction in transepidermal water loss, a key indicator of improved skin barrier function.

Betaine in action

Theory and lab data only go so far unless ingredients prove their value in real formulations. A recent collaboration between IFF and us offers a clear example of how osmolyte science translates into tangible product benefits.

We reformulated our best-selling Aquafix Hydrating Water Gel to incorporate IFF's naturally sourced betaine GENENCARE®OSMS BA. The decision was rooted in both skin biology and formulation performance. Betaine was selected for its ability to support cellular hydration while reinforcing skin barrier integrity — benefits that align closely with Aquafix's positioning as a long-term, barrier-supportive hydrator.

Incorporating betaine was straightforward from a formulation standpoint: it integrated well into a water-based system without disrupting aesthetics such as color or odor. We also noted that betaine helped improve sensorial balance in a high-humectant formula — particularly by helping reduce the tackiness that can occur in glycerin-heavy hydration systems.

An additional advantage was how well betaine paired with glycerin in the formula — supporting hydration while maintaining a lighter skin sensory after-feel.

The Aquafix reformulation illustrates how "quiet workhorse" ingredients can meaningfully shape skin performance when used thoughtfully. Rather than turning to what's trending, betaine's validated efficacy in supporting skin's architecture — hydration, barrier integrity, and overall skin comfort — delivers long term benefits that consumers can feel long term.

Conclusion

As wellness continues to reshape the beauty landscape, skincare is moving away from quick fixes and toward approaches that prioritize balance, resilience, and long-term comfort. The growing emphasis on barrier health reflects a deeper understanding that skin well-being is not just about appearance, but about how skin feels, behaves, and supports emotional reassurance in everyday life.

Ingredients like betaine exemplify this shift. Osmolytes work at the cellular level to help skin adapt to stress and maintain hydration balance, and can offer a quieter, more supportive form of efficacy — one that aligns with wellness-driven routines built on consistency rather than correction.

Ultimately, the convergence of wellness and skincare signals a broader change in how success is defined. As consumers rethink what it means to care for their skin, the focus is increasingly on ingredients and formulations that respect the skin's biology, restore trust in daily rituals, and support skin health that is felt as much as it is seen.

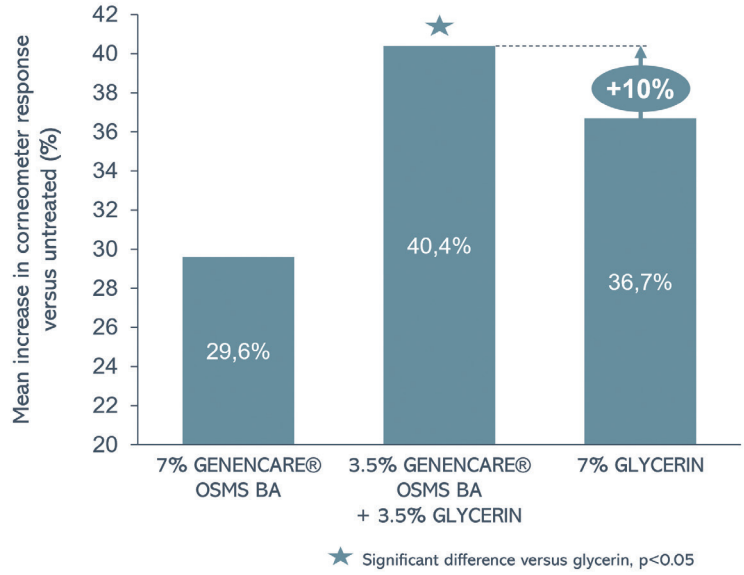


Figure 2: A combination of IFF's betaine and glycerin showed a significant improvement in skin moisturization 8 hours after a single application, compared to the ingredients alone.

Images courtesy of the authors

HOW TO CONVERT THE CONSULTATION YOUR PATIENT ALREADY STARTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

by Terri Ross

Before your next patient walks through the door, they have already formed opinions about what they want, what it should cost, and how long it will take. They have likely spent hours on Instagram and TikTok consuming before-and-after videos, comparing prices in comment sections, and watching an influencer describe a lip filler procedure as painless, affordable, and instantly transformative (with no mention of the additional treatments, products, swelling, or the six-month follow-up that produced the result they are admiring).

By the time they sit across from you, they are not a blank slate. They are a fully formed aesthetic consumer, shaped and "social media-educated" by content you did not create and may be inaccurate.

This is the reality of today's aesthetic consultation, and practices that have not updated their approach are feeling it in their conversion rates, average patient spend, and the quality of their patient relationships.



Image by tippapatt at Adobe Stock



Aesthetic Surgery Journal confirm that between 40% - 60% of patients consult social media before a cosmetic procedure.

What the Data Tells Us

Multiple studies published in the Aesthetic Surgery Journal confirm that between 40% - 60% of patients consult social media before a cosmetic procedure, and that visual platforms like Instagram have overtaken surgeon websites as the primary pre-consultation research tool. TikTok has since emerged as an equally dominant, and largely unregulated, source of procedural content.

The volume is significant. The hashtag #filler had accumulated 2.4 billion views on TikTok at the time of published analysis; #botox has tracked over 12 billion. Between 38% -54% of the videos behind those numbers were produced by non-medical creators, with measurably lower accuracy than provider-generated content.

What arrives in your consultation room is a patient who has done real research and absorbed a meaningful amount of misinformation. They came prepared. What they need is a trusted provider relationship.

The Consultation Has Become Transactional

Here is what I see consistently across the practices I work with: most consultation processes were not built for this patient. They were built for a patient who arrived with a general concern and deferred to clinical judgment. That patient still exists, but they are increasingly the exception.

The more common patient today arrives with a specific request, a reference image, and a price point from a comment section. When the provider responds with a single treatment and a single price, something damaging happens. The consultation becomes transactional rather than transformational.

A single-treatment consultation not only reduces revenue, but reduces expert positioning and the patient outcome. Without a strategy, vision, or a defined pathway, the patient is not choosing a treatment plan. They are deciding whether a number feels worth it. When they are not sure, they decide to shop around. This is how social media creates price shoppers.

What the Consultation Must Do Instead

The provider's job during the consultation is not simply to assess and recommend. It is to close the expectation gap and replace the influencer's incomplete narrative with a clinical expert's complete treatment plan.

That requires a structured approach. At Terri Ross Consulting, we teach a proven consultation blueprint which becomes even more critical when a patient has arrived pre-loaded with social media-driven assumptions.

Image by Kay Abrahams/peopleimages.com at Adobe Stock

- **Assess Using the LAER Model** Before any recommendation is made, listen. The LAER model (Listen, Acknowledge, Educate, Respond) begins with a discipline most providers underestimate: silence. Listen 80% of the time. Ask only open-ended questions. Ask what has been bothering the patient most. Ask how this problem makes them feel and what improving it would do for them personally. This matters especially for the social media patient, because what they say they want is rarely the whole story. "I want Botox" is often shorthand for, "I don't like how my wrinkles look on Zoom." Likewise, "I want my lips done like theirs" often means, "I don't think I look good" or "I'm insecure." The influencer content they consumed spoke to an emotion. If you do not uncover that emotion, you are selling procedures or services. If you do, you are solving problems. People pay to solve problems.
- **Educate to Position Authority** Once you understand the emotional driver, educate strategically. Explain what is actually occurring in the skin or tissue. Clarify what is really happening in the before-and-after image they saved. Articulate your clinical approach and unique value as a provider. You are not contradicting what they saw online. You are providing the expert layer that makes their actual result possible. Patients feel that distinction immediately.
- **Develop the Treatment Plan** This is where most consultations collapse, and where the highest-performing practices differentiate themselves. Present the entire treatment plan that will deliver the best outcome. That is the provider's responsibility. Only if and when they can't afford it should you offer a phased approach: short-term correction, mid-term improvement, long-term plan and maintenance. Explain that aesthetic outcomes are built in steps, not delivered in a single appointment. One treatment may prepare the skin, another may create lift or correction, a third may improve skin quality, and a customized skincare regimen helps maintain the result. When patients see the full picture, they stop comparing your price to what they saw online. They understand they are investing in an outcome, in feeling more confident and the conversation shifts from "How much is it?" to "How do we get started?"
- **Sequence the Treatments with Intention**Explain what comes first and why. What can be combined, and what must follow to achieve and protect the result. A patient who understands the sequence understands the value and stops asking why it costs more than what they saw online.

Language matters enormously and even more so when recalibrating a patient whose expectations were set by a 60-second reel.



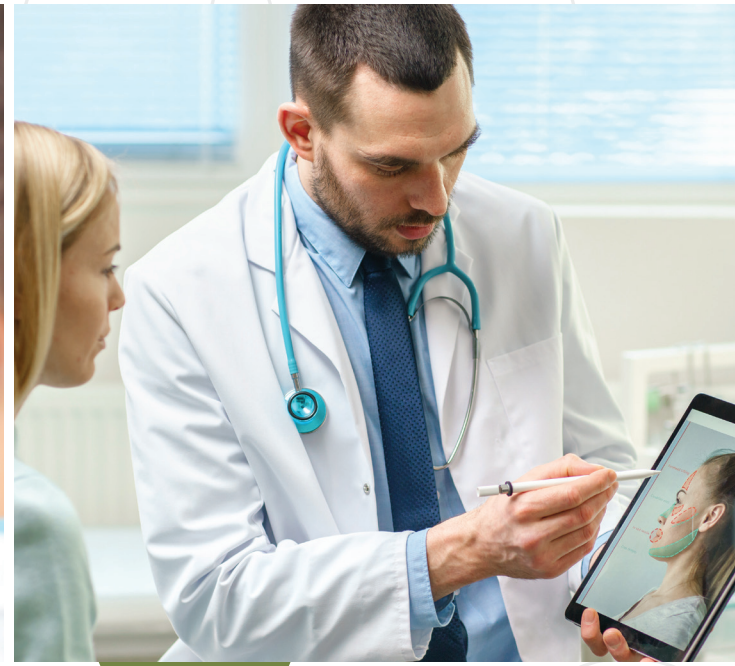


Image by Pixel-Shot; Gorodenkoff at Adobe Stock



Practices creating transparent, education-forward content are not just building audiences.

- **Integrate Skincare as Protocol, Not Add-On**In my experience working with practices across the world, the skincare conversation is the most consistently skipped and most consistently costly omission in the consultation. According to a study in Prime Journal, 86% of patients expect pre-treatment skincare guidance, but only 14% receive it. That is a 72% gap. And 91% expect a post-care regimen and only 30% are prescribed one. Patients who receive a specific skincare recommendation from their provider are significantly more likely to purchase. Patients who don't, leave it to chance, buy elsewhere, or undermine their results with the wrong products. Skincare is not an optional add-on to discuss if time permits. It is part of the treatment plan, and leaving it out compromises outcomes, satisfaction, and retention.
- **Establish the Follow-Up Before They Leave**Set the next appointment before the patient exits the treatment room. Reinforce the plan, the progress markers, and the next steps. A patient who leaves with a scheduled follow-up is a retained patient. A patient who leaves with only a business card is a potential price shopper.

The Language of Clinical Authority

Language matters enormously and even more so when recalibrating a patient whose expectations were set by a 60-second reel.

Phrases like "you could do this" or "if you want, you can" erode clinical authority. They signal uncertainty and transfer decision-making back to a patient who came to you precisely because they needed expert guidance.

The language of authority sounds different. "Based on your goals, here is the plan I recommend." "This is how we sequence treatments to achieve the results you are looking for." "Phase one focuses on correction. Phase two builds longevity." Confidence is not pressure; it's leadership. It is what patients came to your practice to find and could not locate in a comment section on Instagram.

Turning Social Media Into a Pre-Education Channel

The same platforms generating misaligned expectations are also the most powerful pre-education tools available to aesthetic practices when used intentionally.

Practices creating transparent, education-forward content are not just building audiences. They are recalibrating their consultation pipeline before patients arrive. The recovery timeline video. The anatomy explainer. The honest 12-week follow-up video. This content does what influencer posts rarely do. It shows the clinical reality and positions the provider as the expert worth trusting before a single appointment

Image by Kokto_Studio at Adobe Stock

is booked. Patients who arrive having consumed a provider's educational content convert at higher rates, raise fewer price objections, and are more receptive to comprehensive treatment planning.

Audit Your Consultation. Then Update It.

The social-media-informed patient is usually motivated, research-engaged, and emotionally invested, which is exactly the kind of patient aesthetic practices are built to serve. The question is whether your consultation process is structured to meet them where they are, redirect the narrative with clinical authority, and build a treatment plan and relationship that extends beyond the first appointment.

Examine your consultation process honestly. Review your conversion rates (high-performing practices should convert at 70%+), average transaction values, and the objections your team hears most often. Then ask whether your consultation process was designed for the patient of five years ago or the one arriving today, already shaped by social media expectations.

The practices that modernize their consultation process now will convert more patients, retain them longer, increase lifetime value, and create stronger patient relationships. ME

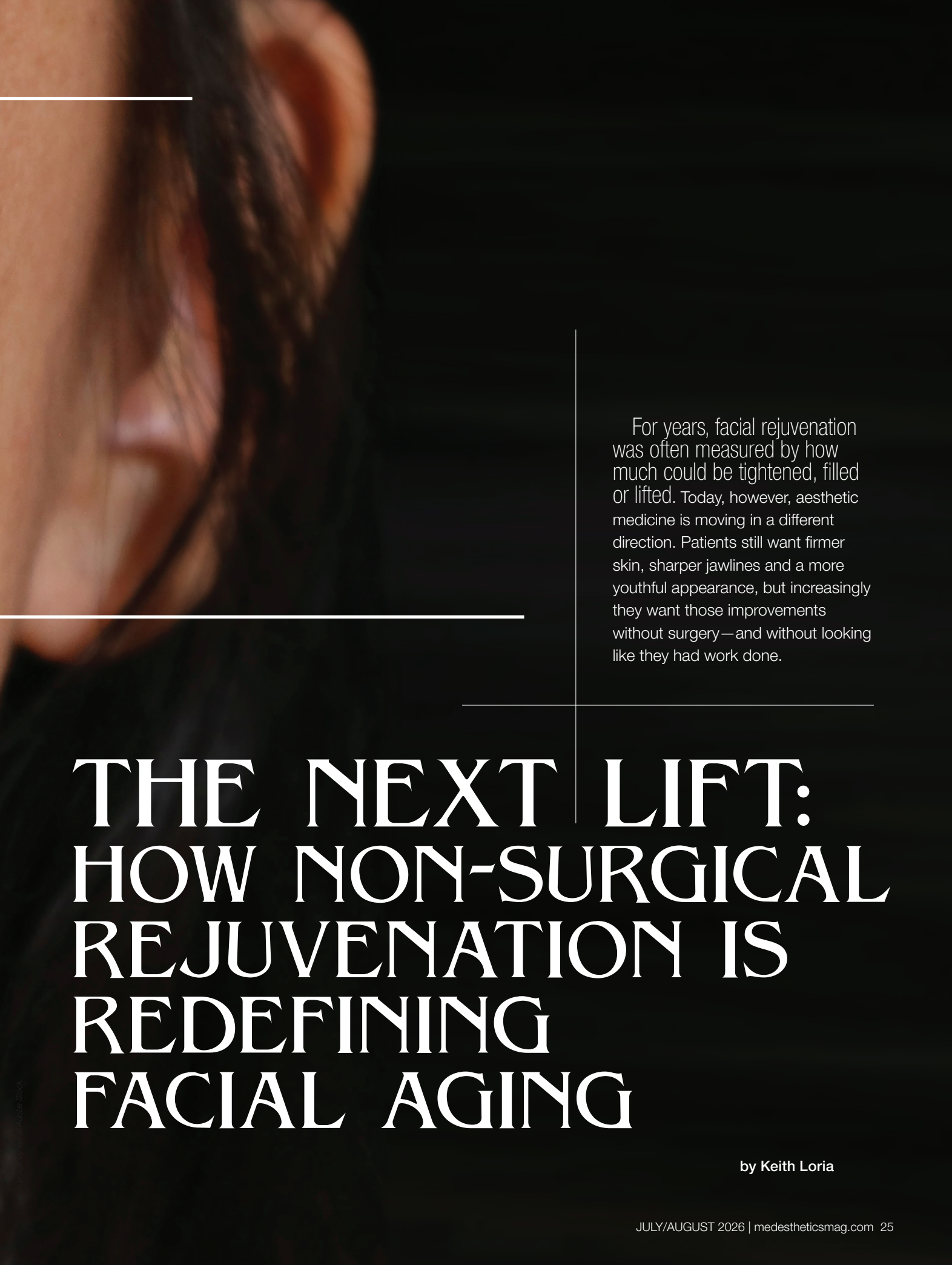


Terri Ross is a globally recognized business strategist, speaker, and high-performance coach in medical aesthetics. With 20+ years of consulting experience and a Fortune 500 sales leadership background, she specializes in practice management, revenue optimization, and sales training. As Founder and CEO of Terri Ross Consulting, she has helped over 2,000 practices scale, driving multi-million-dollar revenue growth. She is Founder of the APX Platform (acquired in 2023) and Co-Founder of the 4S Summit.





Image by Carla Nichiata at Adobe Stock



For years, facial rejuvenation was often measured by how much could be tightened, filled or lifted. Today, however, aesthetic medicine is moving in a different direction. Patients still want firmer skin, sharper jawlines and a more youthful appearance, but increasingly they want those improvements without surgery—and without looking like they had work done.

THE NEXT LIFT: HOW NON-SURGICAL REJUVENATION IS REDEFINING FACIAL AGING

by Keith Loria



Today's patients are specifically seeking treatments that preserve identity.

That shift is driving the next generation of lifting treatments, where energy-based devices, biostimulators, regenerative therapies and carefully sequenced combination treatments are taking center stage. Rather than relying on a single procedure, providers are increasingly addressing aging across multiple layers of the face, focusing on collagen production, tissue quality and long-term maintenance.

"Patients today are generally more informed, more selective, and more focused on natural-looking outcomes than previous generations," said Shay Moinuddin, RN, clinic director at The Few Institute for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. "Undetectable results have become the gold standard as opposed to over-filled or over-operated faces."

That demand for subtle enhancement is influencing everything from treatment selection to technology development.

A Move Away From Overfilling

One of the biggest shifts in facial rejuvenation is the industry's movement away from volume replacement alone and toward rebuilding the skin's underlying support structures.

"Patients are focused on prevention and improving their skin quality at earlier ages, in an effort to avoid major cosmetic procedures in the future," Moinuddin said.

At LEA Plastic Surgery & Aesthetic Lab, founder Goretti Ho Taghva, MD, FACS, has seen a similar evolution. "The pillow face era did a lot of damage, and patients watched it unfold in real time on social media," she said. "They're not coming in to be transformed. They're coming in to be restored."

What's more, today's patients are specifically seeking treatments that preserve identity while improving appearance. "The ask is almost always: make me look like myself, but better," Ho Taghva continues.

That emphasis on natural outcomes has fueled interest in biostimulators such as Sculptra and Radiesse, which encourage the body to generate its own collagen rather than simply adding volume. "In my opinion the greatest impact on facial rejuvenation outcomes has arguably come from biostimulatory injectables," Moinuddin adds. "This shows the shift in patients wanting less 'filling' and more 'rebuilding.'"

Ho Taghva agrees. "They've reframed the conversation from volume replacement to structural rebuilding, which is conceptually more honest," she said. "The problem with the filler-dominant era was that we were adding volume to faces that didn't need more volume—they just needed better architecture."

Image by Guillermo Spelucin at Adobe Stock

At SkinSpirit, Brianna Guttoso, PA, has also seen increasing interest in collagen-building procedures.“Biostimulators and regenerative treatments have become increasingly valuable because they focus on restoring the skin’s underlying support system rather than simply replacing volume,” she said. “These treatments stimulate the body’s natural collagen production, helping improve skin quality, firmness, and structural integrity over time.”

Energy Devices Come of Age

While injectables continue to evolve, energy-based technologies remain a critical part of the non-surgical lifting conversation.

Radiofrequency, ultrasound and laser technologies have all improved significantly in recent years, allowing providers to target skin laxity with greater precision and comfort.

“One of the most significant advancements has been our ability to deliver energy more precisely and consistently while improving patient comfort,” said Dendy Engelman, MD, FACS of Shafer Clinic Fifth Avenue. “Today’s radiofrequency technologies are designed to stimulate collagen remodeling more efficiently, allowing us to address skin laxity and improve firmness with natural-looking results and little to no downtime.”

Patients are responding enthusiastically. “We’re seeing growing interest from both younger patients who want to be proactive about collagen preservation and patients experiencing early to moderate signs of aging,” Engelman said. “Many patients want visible improvement but are not ready for surgery.”

Moinuddin has seen particular demand for ultrasound-based tightening. “Sofwave has become one of the most requested treatments because it addresses mild to moderate skin laxity without surgery,” he said. “It can be used on the face, neck and body, has an incredible safety profile and can be used on all skin types.”

Ho Taghva, agrees, saying that improvements in technology have helped restore credibility to the category. “I’ve been working with Thermage and Ultherapy for 15 years,” she said. “The technology itself has meaningfully improved. Energy settings have been fine-tuned to be more efficient and targeted, treatments are significantly more comfortable and tolerable than they were a decade ago.”

Still, experts caution against overselling outcomes. Steven Pearlman, MD, FACS, owner/facial plastic

Energy-based technologies remain a critical part of the non-surgical lifting conversation.



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surgeon at Pearlman Aesthetic Surgery, said providers must remain realistic when discussing device-based treatments.

"There will be some improvement in non-surgical devices but I do not see any approaching the improvement you can get from an actual facelift," he said.

Combination therapy becomes the gold standard

Perhaps the most significant trend shaping facial rejuvenation is the move away from single-treatment solutions. Experts increasingly describe aging as a multifactorial process involving skin quality, volume loss, collagen depletion, structural changes and tissue descent. Addressing only one component rarely produces optimal outcomes.

"Facial aging is a multifactorial process and therefore no single treatment can effectively address all of its components," Moinuddin said.Moinuddin's approach combines ultrasound lifting, conservative filler placement, neuromodulators and skin resurfacing therapies to address multiple layers of aging simultaneously.

"Combining treatments rather than piecemealing a treatment plan for patients often leads to higher patient satisfaction," he said. It's a philosophy that Guttoso agrees with. "Combination therapy has become the gold standard in aesthetic medicine because aging affects multiple layers of the face simultaneously," she said. "To achieve the most natural and comprehensive results, we need to address skin quality, collagen loss, volume changes, and structural support together."

In practice, that often means pairing energy-based treatments with injectables and regenerative therapies.

"While injectables can restore support, contour, and lift, skin treatments improve texture, tone, pigmentation, and overall skin health," Guttoso said. "The combination creates outcomes that look more complete, balanced, and natural than either treatment could achieve alone."

Ho Taghva follows a similarly layered approach, often combining Ultherapy, Sculptra, BBL Moxi and radiofrequency treatments to address deeper structures and surface quality simultaneously."Deep tissue stimulation, structural collagen rebuilding, and surface skin quality all addressed in the same treatment arc," she said.

Regenerative Aesthetics Enters The Spotlight

While devices and injectables continue to evolve, many experts believe regenerative medicine represents the most exciting frontier in facial rejuvenation.

Lara Devgan, MD, MPH, FACS, founder of Lara Devgan Scientific Beauty, believes regenerative aesthetics is changing how providers think about aging."Regenerative aesthetics has become one of the most interesting frontiers in facial rejuvenation because it changes the conversation from simply moving, filling, or tightening tissue to improving the biologic quality of the tissue itself," she said.

Rather than focusing solely on appearance, regenerative treatments seek to improve tissue health through collagen production, vascularity and cellular signaling. "Better collagen density, dermal thickness, hydration, tone and elasticity can create a face that looks fresher and more luminous without looking 'done,'" Devgan said.

The category includes PRP, exosome-based therapies, growth factors and other emerging treatments designed to support the body's own repair mechanisms. Still, experts urge caution. For instance, Shamsa Kanwal, MBBS, FCPS, a board-certified dermatologist, noted that enthusiasm should be balanced with evidence. "Regenerative options such as PRP can support skin quality, while exosome claims should be discussed carefully because the marketing is ahead of the strongest clinical evidence in many cases," she said.

That measured approach reflects a broader trend in aesthetics: embracing innovation while maintaining realistic expectations.

The Importance of Patient Selection

Even as non-surgical technologies become more sophisticated, providers consistently stress that patient selection remains critical.

"Nothing you inject will lift a face," Pearlman said. "Restoration of facial volume loss or volume enhancement can certainly make some patients appear more youthful, but they will not substitute for surgical rejuvenation." Kanwal noted that non-surgical treatments work best for patients with mild to moderate laxity. "I am very clear that non-surgical treatments can refresh and support the face, but they cannot stop aging or create the same result as surgery," she said.

Ho Taghva believes the discussion should be less about choosing between surgery and non-surgical treatments and more about understanding when each is appropriate. "A facelift repositions tissue and removes

excess, but it cannot surgically improve the texture or quality of the skin that remains," she said. "For that, you need adjunctive tools. They're not competing philosophies. They're complementary ones."

Looking toward the future

As facial rejuvenation continues to evolve, experts largely agree that the future will be defined by personalization, prevention and biologically driven therapies."The future of aesthetics will continue to move toward personalization, regenerative medicine, and full-face assessment," Guttoso said.

Engelman sees a growing emphasis on preserving skin quality and supporting collagen production before significant aging occurs."The goal is not to dramatically change someone's appearance, but to preserve skin quality, support collagen production, and help patients age in a healthy, natural-looking way," she said.

For Devgan, the future lies at the intersection of aesthetics, regenerative medicine and longevity science."The future of facial rejuvenation will not be one magic machine or one injectable," she said. "It will be a more sophisticated understanding of when to regenerate, when to restore, when to operate, and when to leave well enough alone."

That sentiment may best capture the direction of the industry. The next generation of lifting treatments is not about finding a replacement for surgery. Instead, it is about creating smarter, more individualized strategies that improve tissue quality, stimulate collagen and help patients maintain healthy, natural-looking results over time. ME



Keith Loria is a graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for more than 20 years on topics as diverse as healthcare, travel, sports and produce.





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FROM CORRECTION TO REGENERATION:

THE EVOLUTION OF SKIN BRIGHTENING AND TIGHTENING

Joshua Eferighe

Fathertime is undefeated and aging is inevitable. Yet, from arsenic complexion wafers and radium-infused beauty products, to facial straps designed to "lift" sagging skin, humans have spent centuries trying to slow, reverse or conceal the visible signs of aging in hopes of preserving their youth[1] .

It just so happens that our body's natural collagen production — which keeps the skin firm, plump, and resilient — declines as we age. The skin is also the body's largest organ, hence it's the first thing we notice when we age[2] and one of the most popular anti-aging areas of focus.

While human mortality is not a new concept by any means, how society has confronted the reality of our depreciating biological decay has drastically changed over the years: There's been a shift in aesthetic priorities towards wellness and rejuvenation.

"Skin brightening", for example, has moved from tone correction to skin quality optimization. Patients care more about the "why" behind their conditions instead of relying on volume-based injectables and harsh corrections that generally combat aging.

"The biggest skin-brightening and lifting trends in aesthetics promote naturalness and longevity. Lots of



XERF delivers impressive lifting and tightening results through dual radiofrequency technology

patients gravitate toward treatments that address pigmentation, texture, and radiance simultaneously, demanding for non-surgical structural support. Rather than dramatic, overfilled alterations, the focus is on natural, undetectable results from cosmetic procedures that stimulate the body's own biology for a long-lasting, glassy, and lifted glow," Board-Certified NYC Cosmetic Dermatologist Dr. Michele Green, tells MedEsthetics.

Similarly, "skin lifting" has moved from surgical impressions to contour refinement. Patients no longer want the augmented overfilled look of the once-popular Deep Plane Facelift. Rather than chasing individual lines and folds, the modern patient cares about regenerative, low-downtime procedures designed to visibly tighten and rebuild structural integrity through multi-layer, non-invasive rejuvenation.

"One of the biggest trends in aesthetics is the shift toward gentle, barrier-supportive brightening and lifting rather than aggressive resurfacing," Rene Torres, the Director of Wellness at OSMOSIS and an esthetician," says to MedEsthetics. "Ingredients like plant enzymes, lactic acid, azelaic acid, and other mild exfoliants help improve skin tone, texture, and radiance while preserving barrier health. Combined with collagen-supportive ingredients, these approaches deliver brighter, firmer skin without unnecessary irritation or damage," Torres continues.

This industry trend has caused a shift in both treatment expectations and provider approaches."The most effective future protocols will likely combine professional treatments with customized skincare," Jackie Kim, a co-founder and skincare expert at The Glow Beauty Shop, tells MedEsthetics. "Energy-based devices, injectables, regenerative approaches, and daily skincare can work together when the goal is long-term skin improvement," Kim continues.

SKIN QUALITY OVER SKIN CORRECTION

For the longest, skin lightening was correction-driven, aggressive and pigment-focused, with an emphasis on fixing visible defects through chemical peels, hydroquinone and other tyrosinase-inhibiting agents, rather than supporting the skin's operational function[3].

For pigmentation and dark spots, industry practice was to halt melanin production altogether, rather than improving the overall biological health of the skin[4,5], using

Image courtesy of Cynosure Lutronic

harsh acids and potent tyrosinase inhibitors. This process neglected the skin barrier instead of improving the skin's complexion reduction.

Today, as opposed to rapid correction, treatment focuses on barrier repair, inflammation control and gradual pigment modulation. Now, "glow" is a marker of skin health, not just lightness, and abrasive exfoliation scrubs have been replaced with barrier-friendly products.

Industry experts now describe longevity beauty as one of the fastest-growing movements in skincare and aesthetics. Instead of trying to "stop aging," the goal is to protect collagen and elastin, maintain a strong skin barrier, prevent chronic inflammation and support cellular repair.

"Patients want improvements in skin quality, texture, brightness, and firmness from a coordinated treatment plan rather than a single procedure," Emily Dawson says to MedEsthetics. Dawson is the Executive Director & Co-Founder of Avinity Health in Scottsdale, Arizona and says she's witnessing patients who are looking for natural results. "They want to look rested and healthy, not like they've had cosmetic work done. Skin quality has become just as important as wrinkle reduction," she continues.

Korean Skin Care

A large part this movement is due to the Korean skincare boom, as it emphasizes prevention, consistency, and barrier-first skincare. 2024 Research from Fresha revealed that popular terms in Korean beauty like "glass skin" and "dewy glows" are experiencing a significant increase in online searches and social media presence.

"Korean skincare has helped redefine "glow" as something achieved through hydration, skin barrier support, and long-term care rather than temporary correction," Jackie Kim says. "Ingredients like vitamin C, peptides, ceramides, antioxidants, and fermented extracts are becoming increasingly important because they address multiple signs of aging — including uneven tone, dullness, and loss of firmness," Kim continues.

Take K-beauty–inspired wellness and skincare brand, Rael, who recently released two hydrogel masks for skin brightening: the Cryo Soothing Hydrogel Mask and the Glutathione + Vitamin C Brightening Hydrogel Mask. Instead of intense alcohol-based products with the only goal of stripping down the skin, the Rael masks deliver beneficial ingredients, like hyaluronic acid, peptides, mushroom extracts and glutathione, (a hero ingredient in Korean skincare) alongside vitamin C and tranexamic acid in one effortless hydrogel step.



Galderma's Sculptra stimulates the body's collagen production

Dr. Omerine Aseh, who is the Founder & Medical Director GlowMD Aesthetics & Wellness Institute in Katy, Texas, tells MedEsthetics that the Korean skincare ingredients are popular and something she's seen a lot of in the industry, specifically the ingredient of glutathione.

"I continue to see great results from medical-grade skincare, antioxidants, peptides, growth factors, and treatments that support collagen production. I am also seeing more interest in glutathione, particularly among women of color," says Dr. Aseh. "Many of my patients are not necessarily concerned about wrinkles first. They are concerned about hyperpigmentation, uneven skin tone, dullness, and loss of radiance. Glutathione has become increasingly popular because it is a powerful antioxidant that helps reduce oxidative stress and supports overall skin health. I view it as part of a comprehensive approach rather than a magic solution."

The new approach to skin brightening prioritizes skin wellness, not appearance, and the industry has taken notice.

Image courtesy of Sculptra

Energy-Based & Minimally Invasive Skin Tightening

While invasive surgical procedures remain common and are actually increasing in popularity, there has never been as many noninvasive options available for aesthetic patients as there are today. Now you can find a variety of in-office, non-surgical alternatives designed to stimulate the body's natural collagen production without going under the knife. In fact, according to global energy-based global market insights from Delveinsight[6], energy-based non-invasive skin tightening is the fastest-growing category in aesthetic medicine.

When energy devices were first introduced, top brands like Thermage used massive bulk heating to effectively tighten deep tissues and stimulate new collagen production [7,8]. The treatments were highly painful and required high energy levels that sometimes risked fat volume loss or required the use of pain management during the session.[9]

Today, thanks to the recent advances in energy-based devices and injectable treatments, traditional surgical procedures like facelifts no longer require patients to go under the knife.

"Patients today are looking for meaningful, visible results without the recovery, expense, or commitment associated with surgery," Dr. Walter J Joseph, Board Certified Plastic Surgeon, tells MedEsthetics. "Many want to maintain a youthful appearance proactively rather than waiting until they require a facelift or other invasive procedure. Advances in technology have also raised patient expectations—people are no longer satisfied with subtle improvements. They want treatments that deliver real lifting and tightening while fitting into their busy lifestyles, and that's exactly where non-invasive skin tightening has found its sweet spot."

Collagen induction therapies — including microneedling, radiofrequency (RF) microneedling and fractional laser resurfacing — stimulate the skin's natural wound-healing response through neocollagenesis and tissue remodeling.

"Medical microneedling continues to be one of our most versatile treatments because it improves texture, tone, and collagen remodeling," Emily Dawson says. "At Avinity, we often pair it with LED therapy and regenerative topicals such as exosome-based products or salmon DNA (PDRN) formulations, depending on the patient's goals. Following treatment with a high-quality peptide- and ceramide-rich serum helps support the skin barrier during recovery. Rather than relying on a single product or technology, we've found that combining collagen stimulation, regenerative topicals, and thoughtful post-procedure skincare produces brighter skin quality and more natural-looking rejuvenation."

Cynosure Lutronic's XERF™ makes the same promise.Marketed as the world's first multifrequency monopolar radio frequency (RF) system, the device has quickly garnered attention in the aesthetics space as a standout non-invasive skin tightening treatment with Hollywood insiders like Naomi Watts and Khloe Kardashian, as it targets skin laxity and improves overall skin quality without needles, surgery, or downtime for immediate and lasting results.

"Two treatments I'm seeing significant excitement around right now are XERF and Potenza RF Microneedling," Dr. William Harris a double board-certified facial plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills, tells MedEsthetics. Dr. Harris specializes in facial aging procedures, non-surgical rejuvenation, and preventative aesthetics.

"XERF delivers impressive lifting and tightening results through dual radiofrequency technology, while also stimulating collagen for a noticeably brighter complexion. Potenza RF Microneedling complements this beautifully by targeting collagen and elastin remodeling, which improves both skin radiance and texture. On the skincare side, we're also seeing some incredibly promising products entering the market, particularly PDRN serums and growth factor-driven creams, which are becoming essential tools for overall skin maintenance and long-term skin health," Dr. Harris continues.

Whether it's lifting loose skin under the chin or sagging along the jawline, patients now want low downtime and combination outcomes after their radiance and firmness procedures. Rene Torres, warns, however, that clients should be aware its not the same as going under the knife.

"True lifting involves repositioning deeper facial structures, which only surgery can achieve. Non-invasive treatments and topicals can improve firmness, texture, and elasticity by stimulating collagen and supporting skin function, but they cannot create permanent structural lift. These effects can be meaningful, but they are not equivalent to surgical change. At the same time, there is a clear cultural shift toward more natural aging, with many patients and celebrities moving away from overly invasive procedures in favor of subtle, regenerative approaches," Torres says.

Regenerative Skincare and Biologic-Driven Brightening

Patient demand for treatments that support the body's natural repair while minimizing downtime has also


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fueled interest in regenerative aesthetics. According to dermatology trend reports,[10] regenerative therapies are expected to remain among the most influential aesthetic trends in 2026. From exosomes, growth factors and peptides, to biostimulatory injectables, clinicians are increasingly incorporating biologically based approaches into treatment plans. These therapies are often used alongside energy-based devices and collagen-induction procedures to support recovery, manage inflammation and optimize overall treatment outcomes.

"Today's patients aren't just open to comprehensive care plans; they're demanding them. They want a full spectrum approach to anti-aging that spans skincare, energy-based devices, injectables — from hyaluronic acid fillers to biostimulants and regenerative medicine — and metabolic health including peptide and hormone therapy. This field is still in its infancy, and the projected growth curve is more than enough to keep investors paying very close attention," The Alchemy Clinic CEO and Aesthetic Medicine Masters candidate at Queen Mary University, Jennifer Fleming, tells MedEsthetics.

Exosome therapy is a popular regenerative practice that utilizes extracellular vesicles containing signalling molecules, such as growth factors, proteins and RNA. These vesicles facilitate cell-to-cell communication and support tissue repair, collagen synthesis and anti-inflammatory pathways for improved skin quality and resilience. Epione Medical Spa's "One-Hour Facelift" is a prime example of this. Their 60 minute facelift incorporates a patented Coolaser technology that promises only one week of downtime.

There's also skin boosters — such as polynucleotides, microdroplet hyaluronic acid and other biorevitalization agents. By delivering hydration and bioactive compounds into the dermis, these treatments enhance elasticity, support tissue regeneration and improve overall skin texture and radiance. Unlike traditional dermal fillers, skin boosters focus on optimizing the health and appearance of the skin itself rather than reshaping facial contours.

Galderma's Sculptra, for example, works by stimulating the body's collagen production, helping restore facial volume and improve skin quality over time with results that can last up to two years or more.

Together, these treatments reflect a broader shift toward regenerative approaches that prioritize long-term skin quality alongside immediate aesthetic improvement. Practitioners are combining these procedures with biologics such as exosomes or platelet-rich plasma (PRP) to support recovery and potentially enhance treatment outcomes, though research into their long-term efficacy continues to evolve.

What Patients Now Expect

Skincare in the aesthetics industry has evolved from a perspective that was premised on looks to one that is grounded in health. Long-term collagen change, minimal downtime and preventative aging strategies are what patients expect and the industry's most prominent brands are paying attention — it's up to practitioners and medspa owners to follow suit.

"I believe the future of aesthetics is personalized and regenerative," Dr. Omerine Aseh tells MedEsthetics. "We are moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach. The future of rejuvenation is not about finding the next trendy device. It is about understanding the individual sitting in front of you. When we address the foundations—nutrition, hydration, sleep, stress, hormones, inflammation, and skin health—we create results that are not only beautiful but sustainable.That's the difference between treating a symptom and treating the root cause." ME

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WHAT IT ACTUALLY TAKES TO SCALE A TELEHEALTH PROGRAM WITHOUT CUTTING CORNERS

by Dr. Sean Arora



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In healthcare, growth is not a strategy. It is an outcome, and only a good one if the infrastructure behind it is built to last.

Over the course of my career working with both brick-and-mortar healthcare organizations and nationwide telehealth programs, I have seen the full spectrum of how companies approach scale. Some build deliberately, investing in clinical infrastructure, regulatory systems, and provider alignment prior to expanding. Others chase growth first and hope the foundation catches up.

The latter approach rarely ends well.



In healthcare, compliance is not a department. It is part of the product itself.

The Most Dangerous Assumption in Healthcare

The most common mistake I see wellness and telehealth companies make is treating healthcare like a technology company rather than a medical organization.

Founders focus on marketing, patient acquisition, automation, and expansion before the clinical infrastructure is ready to support that growth. Volume becomes the strategy instead of quality. Compliance gets treated as something to address later, a department to build once revenue allows it.

But in healthcare, compliance is not a department. It is part of the product itself.

Small problems become systemic risks at scale. The organizations that skip foundational steps don't just struggle; they fail. They endanger patients, invite regulatory scrutiny, and ultimately undermine the very growth they were chasing.

Why Scaling Healthcare is Different

One challenge that is consistently underestimated is the complexity that arises when brick-and-mortar healthcare and telehealth operations intersect. Many companies assume the rules are the same across both environments. They are not.

As organizations expand, they must navigate state-specific telehealth regulations, provider supervision requirements, and corporate practice of medicine (CPOM) considerations that become exponentially more complex as operations grow. What works in one state or care setting may not be legally or operationally viable in another.

Responsible scaling entails recognizing that healthcare is not simply a technology or clinic business. It is both. Success requires building an operating model that honestly respects the clinical, legal, and regulatory requirements of each environment.

Building the Foundation Before You Need It

There is a rule I apply when evaluating operational readiness: If you cannot maintain quality at 100 patients, you will not maintain it at 100,000.

Before expanding into new states, launching new service lines, or onboarding additional providers, organizations need more than written protocols and functional technology. They need a repeatable clinical operating system. That means strong provider leadership, multi-specialty protocols, structured provider training, quality assurance programs, chart audits, state-specific compliance oversight, clear escalation pathways, and technology that supports clinical decision-making rather than replaces it.

Too many companies view infrastructure as something to build after growth occurs. The best organizations do the opposite: They build the foundation first and scale second.

Image by nenetus at Adobe Stock

In healthcare, growth should never outpace governance. The organizations that succeed invest in infrastructure before they need it. The ones that struggle are often trying to build the plane while flying it.

Medical Oversight as a Strategic Asset

Physician oversight is frequently framed as a regulatory checkbox, something required to remain compliant. That framing misses the point entirely.

Medical oversight should be viewed as a strategic asset.

Strong medical leadership establishes clinical standards, evaluates new therapies, oversees provider performance, monitors quality metrics, and ensures consistent patient care across the organization as it grows. As companies scale, variability becomes one of the greatest risks to both patient safety and organizational reputation.

But the goal is not simply physician oversight. It is provider alignment.

Successful healthcare organizations are built by collaborative care teams. Physicians, nurse practitioners, physician associates, nurses, and operational leaders, all working toward the same standard of care, the same protocols, and the same patient-first philosophy. Every clinician, regardless of credentials, should be practicing from the same framework.

When medical leadership and providers are aligned, organizations make better decisions, identify risks earlier, and build stronger long-term trust with both patients and regulators. Healthcare scales most effectively when business strategy, clinical strategy, and provider collaboration move together.

The Oversimplification of Complex Therapies

There is a troubling trend in the wellness and telehealth space that deserves direct attention: the growing oversimplification of increasingly complex therapies.

Peptides are a clear example. On the one hand, social media influencers and wellness personalities promote them as if they were straightforward consumer products. On the other side, organizations claim to offer these therapies with “medical oversight” without ever defining what that oversight actually means.

Let me be direct: A physician’s name on a website is not medical oversight. A generic protocol is not medical oversight. A one-time review is not medical oversight.

Real oversight requires multi-specialist-guided protocols,

Responsible scaling entails recognizing that healthcare is not simply a technology or clinic business. It is both.



Image by HockleyMedia24/peopleimages.com at Adobe Stock



In healthcare, growth should never outpace governance.

provider education, rigorous patient selection criteria, informed consent processes, ongoing monitoring, outcome tracking, quality assurance, and continuous collaboration among clinicians, operators, pharmacists, compliance professionals, and specialists.

Many of these therapies exist at the intersection of emerging science, evolving regulations, and rapidly shifting patient demand. That requires humility, multidisciplinary collaboration, and an authentic commitment to staying current as evidence evolves.

The same principle applies to artificial intelligence in healthcare. AI has genuine potential to help clinicians process information more efficiently, identify patterns, and support better patient outcomes. But the organizations that will lead in this space are not the ones choosing between technology and clinical judgment. They are the ones thoughtfully combining innovation, expertise, and strong oversight; treating AI as a tool that improves care, not one that replaces accountability.

What Sets Successful Organizations Apart

The organizations that scale successfully share four characteristics. They are patient-centered. They are clinically grounded. They are operationally disciplined. And they are collaborative.

That last quality is more important than it is often given credit for.

One of the biggest challenges in healthcare growth is overcoming ego. Organizations that struggle often believe they can solve every problem internally, that their team has all the answers, and that outside expertise is a sign of weakness. The organizations that thrive recognize the opposite. They actively seek collaboration. They bring together clinicians, operators, technologists, and specialists with different perspectives and complementary strengths.

Healthcare is too complex for any single founder, physician, operator, or technology platform to navigate alone. The willingness to acknowledge that, and to build partnerships accordingly, is one of the most reliable predictors of long-term success.

There is more than enough opportunity in healthcare for everyone. The goal should not simply be to capture market share. The goal should be to advance medicine responsibly and improve patient outcomes.

A Direct Message to Founders and Operators

Healthcare is not a race to scale. The companies that win are not the ones that grow the fastest. They are the ones still standing and still delivering quality care five years later.

Build the infrastructure. Build the team. Build the trust. Then grow.

In healthcare, every shortcut eventually becomes a patient problem.

The future of this industry will not be built by individuals or organizations working in silos. It will be built by clinicians, operators, technologists, researchers, and innovators working together with a common commitment: delivering better care to more patients without jeopardizing quality.

That is a goal worth building toward slowly and well. ME



Dr. Sean Arora is a board-certified physician and the co-founder of Arora Health & Aesthetics, bringing deep expertise in wellness, family medicine, and telehealth innovation. He leads one of the nation's most comprehensive medical oversight and compliance networks, supporting clinics through full-spectrum medical directorship, nationwide telehealth provider coverage, and evidence-based protocol development across peptides, hormone optimization, weight loss, regenerative medicine, and aesthetic treatments.

Known for his forward-thinking approach to patient safety and scalable clinical operations, Dr. Arora partners closely with medical spas, wellness clinics, and telehealth organizations to ensure responsible, compliant, and impactful care. Licensed in all 50 states, he is dedicated to expanding access to high-quality wellness services through innovation, leadership, and patient-centered standards.

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What Obagi's $460M Acquisition Signals for the Future of Medical Aesthetics

Industry observers say the deal reflects broader changes unfolding across the medical aesthetics landscape.

Image courtesy of Obagi Medical

38-year-old professional skincare brand, Obagi Medical, was sold to private equity firm, Bridgepoint Group, for up to $460 million on July 1, 2026, according to reports.

Waldencast, who acquired both Obagi and Milk Makeup in a $1.2 billion three-way transaction in November of 2021, agreed to sell the Texas-based dermatological skincare business at a deal that reportedly represents a 2.8X multiple on the brand's $161.6 million in sales and a 23.7X multiple on its $19.4 million in adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization

Related: Waldencast To Acquire Obagi and Milk Makeup Brands

Industry observers say the deal reflects broader changes unfolding across the medical aesthetics landscape.

Dr. Reena Jasani, who is a medical aesthetic practitioner and founder of Aesthetics by Reena, says practices are becoming more retail aware and brand consistent, oftentimes with in-house skincare menus or partnering exclusively with a small number of physician led brands.

"Patients expect continuity, so if they trust a practitioner for injectables, they also want skincare recommendations that feel aligned with that same clinical philosophy rather than generic retail advice. Many medspas are now training staff to think like skin coaches rather than procedural providers, which means every treatment visit includes product guidance as part of a longer term plan. The operational shift is significant because it requires inventory management, education, and a more structured patient journey, but it also increases revenue per patient and strengthens loyalty when done well," says Dr. Jasani to MedEsthetics.

SkinMedica is another established physician-dispensed skincare brand that now a strategic asset within a broader aesthetics ecosystem. Following its acquisition by Allergan Aesthetics in 2012 — which is a subsidiary of the global pharmaceutical company AbbVie — SkinMedica joined a portfolio that includes Botox Cosmetic, Juvederm and DiamondGlow, all under the Allergan Aesthetics umbrella. The outcome is a portfolio that Allergan can now market as an integrated aesthetic offering.

Dr. Nora Albaldawi, who is the principal dentist at Skintique Beautiful Smiles, says because physician-dispensed skincare brands are increasingly being viewed as strategic assets within larger aesthetic ecosystems rather than singluar beauty companies, skincare is now positioned as apart of a patient's treatment plan before, during and after procedures, as opposed to a standalone retail category.

"Over the next three to five years, I'd expect to see continued convergence between dermatology-led skincare, injectables and clinic-based treatment ecosystems, where brands are valued based on how well they can lock in patients across multiple touchpoints rather than just product sales," Albaldawi says.

"We're not entering this era — we've already been here for the last few years," Jennifer Fleming, CEO of The Alchemy Clinic and Aesthetic Medicine Masters candidate at Queen Mary University, adds, speaking to MedEsthetics. "Investor and private equity interest in aesthetic brands is driven by a simple reality: this space is profitable, cash-based, and carries high-yield margins. Beyond the financials, aesthetic medicine and skincare tap into something deeply human — the desire to feel beautiful, build confidence, and address our inherent self-consciousness about appearance," Fleming continues.

For aesthetic practices, the shift underscores the growing importance of patient lifetime value.

"Consumers place a high value on trust and continuity," Bathula Meghana, the founder and CEO of GlowBareSkin, tells MedEsthetics. "As a founder, I've noticed that people are seeking guidance rather than just products. This creates an opportunity for practices to offer a more holistic approach that combines treatments with carefully selected skincare regimens and ongoing support. Patients increasingly want a trusted partner throughout their skin health journey instead of one-time procedures."

"The acquisition validates consumers' demand for science-backed, results-oriented skincare more than it validates any particular label. In my experience, consumers care less about marketing terminology and more about trust, ingredient quality, and outcomes. Independent practices that focus on education, personalization, and long-term relationships will continue to have a meaningful advantage, even as larger players consolidate the market,"Meghana continues. ME

Joshua Eferighe is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics.*

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SKINCARE SALES ARE BEHIND PROFITABLE MEDSPA VISITS

New transaction data from Guidepoint Qsight shows that professional-grade skincare has become a significant revenue driver for medical aesthetics practices. Released in May, the data shows that in 2025, 25% of all non-energy-based device skin rejuvenation visits — from chemical peels and mechanical microneedling, to hydradermabrasion — also included a professional-grade skincare purchase at the same visit. Thoes purchase added an average of $174 per appointment, often increasing total patient spend by 50% or more relative to the procedure alone. For practices focused on maximizing per-visit revenue and patient retention, the findings highlight a significant growth opportunity.



BOTOX, NEUROTOXINS 'THE GATEWAY INTO AESTHETICS'

New Qsight data on the popularity of neurotoxins like Botox suggests that the trend is far from slowing down. According to new new transaction data, a third of all new medical aesthetics clients seeking non-surgical ways to improve their appearance start by having Botox, Daxxify and Letybo. The data also reveals that neurotoxin clients not only return for follow-up appointments, but also expand into other aesthetic services and retail skincare—signaling a more integrated treatment journey across practices."Professional-grade skincare cross-purchasing has remained consistently strong for several years, particularly alongside skin rejuvenation treatments. The data suggests this growth is primarily driven by provider recommendation at the point of care, where skincare is increasingly positioned as part of a comprehensive treatment plan rather than a stand-alone retail purchase," Erika Sheyn, the SVP of Aesthetics at Guidepoint Qsight, says.



SENTÉ RENEWS PARTNERSHIP WITH DERMATOLOGY PIONEER RICHARD GALLO

Senté, a medical-grade skincare line best known for developing anti-aging and anti-inflammatory products, has renewed its Chief Scientific Advisor agreement with Harvard Medical School and former AAD president, Richard Gallo M.D. The agreement extends the longstanding partnership between Dr. Gallo and Senté that has helped shape the company's scientific foundation and clinical direction since its inception.

Images by ChayTee; LimeSky; Galaxy_love_design at Adobe Stock



Image courtesy of Galderma

Galderma Receives U.S. FDA Approval for Differin Epiduo Acne Gel

Galderma Receives U.S. FDA Approval for Differin Epiduo Acne Gel

On May 22, 2026, pure-play dermatology category leader, Galderma, announced its Differin Epiduo Acne Gel was approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for over-the-counter use in ages 12 years and older.

Most OTC acne products only contain benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid, making Galderma's prescription-strength treatment — which combines adapalene 0.1% (a retinoid) with benzoyl peroxide 2.5% in a single formulation — accessible without a physician's visit.

Related: 5 Notable Developments in Derm-Recommended OTC Skin Care [Survey Results]

While medical-grade, professional skin care is the best option when it comes to recommending clinical topical solutions for patients' skin concerns, dermatologist-recommended over-the-counter skin care brands like Galderma offers patients a take-home acne care option that's been backed by more than 15 years of real-world dermatologist use and a robust clinical research program.

Medspa and wellness facilities can now enhance their patient care by providing the best treatment available for each patient, as patients are always looking for dermatologist recommended OTC skin care brands. Similarly, practitioners can now add Galderma's Differin Epiduo Acne Gel to their list of dermatologist-trusted, prescription-strength treatments when planning a skin care regimen to treat acne.

Related: How to Subdue Stubborn Acne for Good

"The approval of Differin Epiduo over the counter allows for more open access to a clinically proven acne treatment for those who are not currently under a dermatologist's care and are not experiencing severe acne," Dr. Bill Andriopoulos, who is Head of Global Medical Affairs at Galderma, says to MedEsthetics.

"This approval also gives dermatologists an OTC option with robust clinical evidence for their patients. Importantly, dermatologists remain the most trusted source for guidance on acne management, particularly when OTC care is not sufficient. If acne does not improve with consistent OTC treatment or is severe, painful, or scarring, consulting a dermatologist is always recommended," Dr. Andriopoulos continues.

The Prescription-to-OTC transition highlights Galderma's scale and expertise in successfully commercializing dermatology innovations across the full spectrum of acne care, which is especially important during a time where acne treatment is needed.

"Acne is affecting a growing proportion of the population, with almost half of people ages 18-34 experiencing acne. At the same time, more acne sufferers are self-managing care, with non-prescription product use rising. This created a clear need for more effective, clinically proven options in the OTC space, which Differin Epiduo is uniquely positioned to address," Andriopoulos says.

The topical acne treatment is able to clear clogged pores, kill acne-causing bacteria, reducing acne inflammation and prevent future breakouts, all due to the combination of its two main components: Adapalene and benzoyl peroxide — together, these two dermatologist-trusted ingredients address key biological drivers of acne.

Differin Epiduo will be available over-the-counter at most major retailers, including Walmart, Ulta, Target and Amazon, beginning in the summer of 2026. With a commitment to providing effective solutions across consumers' acne journey, the Differin portfolio also includes cleansers, treatments, and moisturizers to support and provide wholistic solutions. For more information on Differin Epiduo and other Differin products, please visit www.differin.com ME

Joshua Eferighe is the associate managing editor of *MedEsthetics.*

AD INDEX

Aerolase Laser Skin Health C2–1

aerolase.com

Alma Lasers, Inc. C1, 8–11

Fallene Ltd..... C4

www.tizofusion.com

Induction Therapies 7

collagenpin.com

New Medical Technology.....5



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