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medical dermatology update

Questions and Answers

Shed some light

Q: I heard that there is a new light-based, pain-free technology using low intensity light that can make the skin look younger in seconds. Is this true and if so, can you tell me about it?

A: Photomodulation is a new and exciting technology that has been shown to improve the appearance of environmentally damaged skin. It uses non-laser, light-emitting diodes operating at specifically calibrated parameters, which are thought to photoactivate or photoinhibit the normal cellular activity of living cells. Skin biopsies of treated patients showed increased collagen production in the dermis.

Patients have reported an improvement in skin and a decrease in pore size, skin roughness and redness. Using this treatment in conjunction with non-ablative lasers appears to enhance the results.

Risk management

Q: Are there any risks to getting a Brazilian bikini wax?

A: Brazilian bikini waxing is safe, but like all waxing, can occasionally activate a dormant herpes infection or cause ingrown hairs and folliculitis in susceptible indi-

viduals. Individuals with a history of herpes should consider taking oral antiviral prophylaxis prior to waxing. Those who develop folliculitis should consult with a dermatologist for treatment.

Tub hubbub

Q: Can you catch some kind of skin infection from a whirlpool?

A: *Pseudomonas folliculitis* can sometimes be transmitted to those who frequent whirlpools, particularly commercial units that have not been properly balanced with chemicals to control the pH. Individuals who develop an acne-form eruption on their body following whirlpool immersion should seek consultation with a dermatologist for treatment.

Careful use of Botox can selectively widen eyes.

From black to white

Q: Can you change your skin color from black to white like Michael Jackson?

A: It is possible to permanently bleach out skin color by destroying melanocytes in the skin, using a chemical called Benoquin. This aggressive treatment is rarely used in individuals with African American skin who suffer from severe vitiligo.



Thine eyes ...

Q: Can a person's eye shape be changed with Botox?

A: Yes, careful use of Botox can selectively widen eyes. Some patients interested in changing their eye appearance have sought treatment for this indication.

Injection affection

Q: Is it true that more than 2 million people were injected with Botox last year?

A: According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery survey, Botox ranks first among all cosmetic procedures performed in 2003, increasing 37 percent from 2002. The top five cosmetic procedures in 2003 were Botox injections (2,272,080); laser hair removal (923,200); microdermabrasion (858,312); chemical peels

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(722,248); and collagen injection (629,476). Human-derived collagen products (Cosmoderm, Cosmoplast) were used in 29 percent of collagen injection procedures.

Metrosexuals

Q: Is it true that men had more than a million cosmetic procedures in 2003?

A: According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, men had 13 percent of all cosmetic procedures performed in 2003. The number of procedures performed in men was nearly 1.1 million, an increase of 31 percent from 2002.

The top five non-surgical cosmetic procedures for men were Botox injections (309,063 and 14 percent of the Botox total); laser hair removal (227,990 and 25 percent of the total); microdermabrasion (84,049 and 10 percent of the total); chemical peels (82,174 and 11 percent of the total); and collagen injections (51,674 and 8 percent of the total).

Controlled development

Q: Can soy reduce the amount of hair on the body?

A: Yes, topical soy has been shown to decrease hair. It is a wonderful adjunct in the management of



Topical soy has been shown to decrease hair. It is a wonderful adjunct in the management of hypertrichosis.

hypertrichosis (increased hair). The Aveeno line of skin care products contains topical soy. Individuals with thick hair growth who do not elect to undergo laser hair removal or those who are susceptible to ingrown hairs should consider using a topical moisturizer containing soy.

A bad vitamin?

Q: Is it true that vitamin E has actually been shown to worsen scars?

A: Yes, in a well-designed, double-blind study on treatment of facial scars, it was shown that 90 percent of patients whose scars were not treated with vitamin E looked better than those treated with vitamin E. Also, one-third of patients treated with vitamin E developed an allergic contact dermatitis. ■

Debra Price, M.D., graduated from New York University School of Medicine and interned at New York University Medical Center. She is a diplomate



of the American Board of Dermatology and is an assistant professor at University of Miami's department of dermatology and cutaneous surgery. An author of several scientific papers, Dr. Price is an award-winning dermatologist and past president of the Miami Dermatologic Society, in Florida. She has a private practice in Kendall, FL. To reach her, please call (305) 670-1111.

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