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September / October 2005

Aluma RF Device Introduces Painless Wrinkle Reduction

Many patients are seeing a significant reduction in wrinkles and some skin tightening with the Aluma system from Lumenis Inc. (Santa Clara, Calif.). The non-invasive treatment uses a breakthrough technology termed FACES (functional aspiration controlled electrothermal stimulation) to safely and painlessly heat the dermis and stimulate collagen regeneration.

“This unique vacuum assisted bipolar delivery of radiofrequency (RF) energy deep into the dermis bypasses the epidermis, resulting in a pain free and minimal risk procedure,” said Michael Gold, M.D., owner of Gold Skin Care Center in Nashville, Tenn. “In fact, this is the first RF device for tightening that does not hurt. We know RF can hurt like hell. The difference with the Aluma, however, is that it uses a vacuum apparatus to conform the skin placing the dermis in line with the RF current. I speculate that the lack of pain is caused either by the vacuum apparatus compressing the nerves or some other mechanism that we have yet to figure out. In any event, this is truly painless RF delivery. We do not use any kind of anesthesia.”

In a safety and efficacy study of 46 patients treated for wrinkles around the eyes and the mouth, “everyone at least achieved a 50% improvement,” said study co-author Dr. Gold. “There were changes in the wrinkle score, elastosis score, visual analog scores, and blinded pictures. All variables improved across the board by over

50% in every subject.” Patients were treated once a week for eight weeks, then followed for up to six months. “Nearly everyone achieved their maximum improvement in wrinkles at five weeks,” Dr. Gold reported.

Photos courtesy of Michael Gold, M.D.



Before Tx



Three months after Aluma Tx

A second trial at six clinical sites is evaluating both wrinkle improvement and skin tightening, using an improved patient protocol. “We’ve also made some subtle improvements in the Aluma software, so we expect we’ll have an even better endpoint,” Dr. Gold said. “Preliminarily, we’re observing some skin tightening. But we need to quantify it through pictures and measurements.” The investigators are using a PRIMOS three dimensional optical scanning system (Canfield Imaging Systems) for skin topographic analysis.

Mitchel Goldman, M.D., medical director at Dermatology/Cosmetic Laser Associates of La Jolla, Inc., in La Jolla, Calif., primarily uses the Aluma for skin tightening around the neck. “We’re also using it for skin tightening in the knees, the elbow region and the lower abdomen,” he said. Patients are scheduled once a week for six weeks.

The Aluma uses bipolar rather than monopolar RF. “With bipolar, you need less energy to heat up the dermis. This translates into less patient discomfort,” noted Dr. Goldman, who was the co-author of the first study and one of the investigators of the ongoing study. “In addition, the vacuum eliminates the vascularity in the skin. Therefore, the RF will not follow the path of the blood vessels. Instead, the RF goes into the tissue, causing tightening.”

The Aluma system is also easy to integrate into a practice. “Treatments are very fast and don’t require any topical anesthetics. The neck usually takes only five minutes, as do other individual areas,” Dr.



Goldman reported. “The Aluma is effective in nearly every patient, unlike some other RF techniques that are only efficacious in certain patients. I believe the Aluma is the next generation of radiofrequency.” ■