

Alma's Laser Platforms Excel in Treating Skin of Color



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36 year old female with PCOD and high testosterone levels before Tx



36 year old female with PCOD and high testosterone levels five months after three 650 nm treatment

Photos courtesy of Pradyumna Viadya, M.D.

By Desiree Ifft, Contributing Editor

Aesthetic physicians focused on meeting the challenge of providing culturally sensitive, safe and effective treatments for patients with skin of color find Alma Lasers (Buffalo Grove, Ill.) to be a powerful partner. The company's laser platforms include technologies ideal for addressing a range of conditions in all Fitzpatrick skin types, including types IV-VI.

Citing U.S. Census Bureau data, Eduardo Weiss M.D., F.A.A.D., of Hollywood Dermatology and Cosmetic Specialists (Hollywood, Fla.), said that by 2050, ethnic groups including Hispanics, Asians, African Americans and American Indians will represent more than 50% of the U.S. population. Aesthetic practices are already seeing the effects of these demographic shifts. As noted by the *American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS)*, “Aesthetic medicine has seen a dramatic increase in the diversity of the patients treated over the past decade and this trend is expected to continue to grow stronger than ever.”*

Dr. Weiss, who is also an associate clinical professor of dermatology and dermatologic surgery at the University of Miami, said physicians need to understand the characteristics of skin of color and its varied responses and amenability to available treatment modalities. “Ethnic skin has a thicker stratum corneum, larger and more numerous fibroblast cells, larger macrophages and larger oil glands that lead to increased oil production,” he explained. “Melanocyte and fibroblast reactivity increases the risk of dyschromias, post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH) and hypertrophic scars. Curved hair follicles in some groups of ethnic patients make them prone to follicular disorders, which can lead to keloids and PIH.”

A challenge in treating hair related conditions with lasers is to treat the hair without damaging the surface of the skin and without compromising efficacy, Dr. Weiss

noted. The keys to success are to use longer wavelengths, lower fluences and longer pulse durations and to maximize cooling, which is why he prefers Alma Lasers' Soprano family of technologies. “The 810 nm diode Soprano is FDA cleared to treat patients with skin types I-VI, as well as sun tanned skin,” he said. “The Soprano with SHR IN-Motion technology includes the Sapphire Dual Chill tip and is the only device that delivers high average power while utilizing low fluence and a high repetition rate to gradually heat the dermis. It has created a new standard in virtually painless laser hair reduction.”

Like Dr. Weiss, Seema Patel, M.D., M.P.H., medical director of Shanti Medical Spa and Wellness Center at The Institute for Optimal Health & Advanced Skin Care in Ardmore and Philadelphia, Pa., said the most requested treatments by patients with ethnic skin tones are for pigment changes, such as melasma, and unwanted hair.

For Dr. Patel, success hinges on choosing the right technologies, understanding what they can do, pre-treating patients prior to procedures with hydroquinone, retinoic acid and vitamin D and close follow-up. Her laser treatment of choice for hyperpigmentation and acne scars is the Pixel 2940 nm Er:YAG module from Alma Lasers. “The Pixel 2940 is a fractionated technology that creates columns of thermal damage while leaving surrounding tissue unaffected,” she said. “This results in faster recovery and minimizes complications. Pixel 2940 combines the visible results of an ablative therapy with the gentleness and patient comfort of non-ablative methods.”

Both Dr. Patel and Dr. Weiss said patients with skin of color have many misconceptions about laser treatment. “We have technologies that allow safe and effective treatment of these darker skin types, and we need to help patients understand that,” Dr. Patel advised.

**American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. 10 Cosmetic Plastic Surgery Predictions for 2011. Available at: <http://www.surgery.org/media/news-releases/10-cosmetic-plastic-surgery-predictions-for-2011>.*