

Thermage With Liposuction Tightens Abdomen

BY TIMOTHY F. KIRN
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PALM DESERT, CALIF. — Thermage radiofrequency treatment can be combined with liposuction to shrink loose skin in the abdomen, Dr. Victoria G. Belo said at the annual meeting of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery.

“By virtue of its noninvasive nature combined with its excellent safety profile, this complementary use of Thermage and liposuction provides an attractive alternative to surgical procedures for patients who want to treat skin laxity,” said Dr. Belo, who practices in Manila.

Dr. Belo presented an investigation of 30 patients undergoing liposuction: Ten underwent a Thermage procedure at the time of their liposuction, 10 received a Thermage treatment 1 month after liposuction, and 10 served as controls.

Dr. Belo said that she treated an area of

the abdomen that was 20 cm by 14 cm in all the patients, using a 50% overlapping technique, and followed the patients once a month for 6 months.

In all the patients, the area marked out but not treated measured an average of 280 cm². At 1 month, the area in the patients who did not receive Thermage treatment measured an average 239 cm² and did not change for the remainder of the study.

In the group treated immediately with Thermage, however, the area began to

contract at about 3 months, and by the fourth month the average size of the area was about 200 cm². That reduction was maintained through the 6-month measurement, Dr. Belo said.

The group treated 1 month after liposuction had about half the improvement of the immediate-treatment group. “It is really not until the fourth to sixth month that you can see a difference,” Dr. Belo said.

Dr. Belo speculated that those who were treated 1 month after their liposuction

might not have had a response because fibrotic tissue from the liposuction procedure had already formed. Alternatively, there may have been a positive interplay between the inflammation stimulated by the liposuction procedure and the Thermage treatment, enhancing the effect, she said.

“It is possible that you have some scar tissue from liposuction at 1 month that is unresponsive to Thermage,” she said.

Dr. Belo indicated that she has no financial ties to Thermage Inc. ■

Turn Up the Volume on Facial Aging Treatment

PALM DESERT, CALIF. — The new, overriding concept in cosmetic procedures is that what the aging face often needs is new volume.

It is the view that the aging face is a “deflated” face, Dr. Gary D. Monheit said at the annual meeting of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery.

“It is the volume loss as much as the ptosis,” said Dr. Monheit, immediate past president of the ASDS. “It is the volume loss in the face that has become the new concept, the volume loss of bone, fat structure, and muscles, and we now have some new handles in order to rejuvenate.” Such “handles” include using fillers like hyaluronic acid to enhance hollow cheeks, and barbed sutures used to lift the malar area to smooth out nasolabial folds and create an impression of high cheekbones.

Dr. Monheit, who practices in Birmingham, Ala., said this approach follows the precepts articulated by Dr. Richard Glogau of the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Glogau said there are four features of the aging face that can be addressed by the cosmetic dermatologist. He calls them the four Rs: rebuild, relax, resurface, and redrape.

For rebuilding, there are fillers. For relaxing, there is botulinum toxin. For resurfacing, there are lasers and cosmeceuticals. And, for redraping, there are the barbed threads. But, all of these options also are making cosmetic dermatology much more complex than it has ever been.

The new challenge for cosmetic dermatology is the number of products now available for rejuvenation, with many more probably coming soon, an almost bewildering array, Dr. Monheit said.

The field will have to be careful in evaluating and embracing these products as they come onto the market, he warned.

—Timothy F. Kirn



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