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Aesthetic medicine is not only a very rewarding field it is also very exciting. The most exciting thing about this field is the continual leaps and bounds of technology that translates into new and improved equipment that is released almost every year. The problem is that you need to be able to separate the hype of some companies and the proven results that we can achieve in our practice. I literally have an offsite storage unit that is filled with several hundred thousand dollars' worth of technology that I will not use in our office. These have not lived up to their company's claims and therefore lead to poor patient outcomes and dissatisfaction. Based on this aggravating scenario we put a moratorium on the purchase of any new equipment. We decided that the only equipment that we would even consider would be that which we were able to test in our office to see if we could duplicate the reported results within our practice.

That may seem like a simple idea but not very many companies are willing to work within these parameters. That is understandable since it takes time, effort and energy to get the equipment to the physician's office, perform therapies, interact with the staff, etc. And at the end of the process it is possible that the physician is not happy and has no further interest in going any further. They would much rather sell their technology based on their own studies, their own physician testimonials and their own before and after photos than to allow their prospective physicians to do their own due diligence.

Recently a company offered an improved technology for the hottest treatments in aesthetics – spot fat reduction and skin tightening. The company's initial presentation, their testimonials (by physicians and patients) and their before and after photos were very impressive. The question was, would they comply and let us test the equipment in house as per our protocols? Yes, they had enough confidence in their product to allow our field testing. I am happy to report that it passed all our scrutinies with patient results and satisfaction. Fortunately this new technology, known as *Exilis*, is now available to patients locally.

Okay so exactly what is *Exilis*, what is it used for and how does it work. The *Exilis* is an advanced, FDA approved, aesthetic device that utilizes radio frequency waves that will have one of two functions depending on how the machine is set. In one mode it can effect a spot reduction of fat. For example a patient with a desire to reduce targeted fat, i.e., "love handles", a belly "pooch" a fat pocket at the inner knee, underarm fat, and neck fat will be treated in one mode. In the other mode it can tighten loose skin in any body area. Specifically it has been very effective in the abdomen, neck, face and arms.

The radio frequency (RF) waves serve as a mechanism to produce a controlled heating of the targeted treatment area. The heat is used to cause a thermal injury area. When aimed deeper below the skin the heat generated by the RF supplied by *Exilis* can liquefy underlying fat and thereby reduce fat and contour the body. When set to a different mode the energy of the *Exilis* is aimed more superficially to the lower part of the skin, the dermis. The natural response to thermal injury to this area is to cause a "rebirth" of healthy skin with increased production of fibrin, elastin and collagen. The effect is a tighter,

healthier looking skin. The challenge was to develop a technology that could deliver sufficient heat to the targets without causing superficial damage (burns), internal damage and be a comfortable procedure to undergo. Radio frequency is not a new idea and has been used in various applications for decades. Unfortunately most attempts to be able to deliver enough energy without harm failed. The systems that were released, though they may have had some effect, most yielded results that were mediocre and did not live up to patient and physician expectations.

The usual treatment regime consists of a series of 4 treatments. These are weekly treatments and there should be no interruption in the timing of the treatments. The sessions take about 6-8 minutes for each side (left and right) of the treatment area. A thin layer of gel is placed on the skin prior to treatment. Then a treatment head gently glides on the skin in a circular motion. The client will feel a sensation of deep heat there is no discomfort. Unlike lasers RF is "color blind" so it can be used with all skin types, tanned skin and ethnic skin. There are only two absolute contraindications to the use of Exilis. It cannot be used in any patient with a pacemaker or in patients who are or may be pregnant. One of the best features of Exilis is the fact that most patients see a positive change quickly. Commonly some results are seen the day after therapy and more significant changes after the second treatment, then continued improvement. Although the primary sequence is 4 treatments some clients add to this and may stagger these for even better results over time. There is no downtime following the treatment. The skin may have a reddish blush similar to a wind burn for a brief time after the procedure. The results of the treatment is anticipated by researchers to last 1-2 years. Older patients (patients have been successfully treated into their 90's) have shown extremely good results in correcting areas of loose skin particularly in the neck area.

There are plenty of people that have been fortunate to have great genetics with low body fat or only small pockets of fat. There are those who must work out and diet diligently to maintain their hard earned results. Even these clients have areas of stubborn fat which they can't eliminate. Then there are the rest of us with the fatty neck, arms, knees etc. All are appropriate candidates for Exilis' spot fat reduction treatment. Unfortunately, as we age, we are all faced with some amount of skin loosening or laxity. The skin tightening mode is extremely useful here. The procedure has also been effective in treating loose, sagging skin that may follow weight loss, pregnancy or liposuction. Of course prior to any treatment a physician or consultant will review the appropriateness of treatment and review goals and expectations. Exilis is definitely not a weight loss procedure and fat in the treated areas may return if there is a change your lifestyle- change in dietary patterns and/or exercise.

As evidenced by the release of Exilis and other new technologies there are aesthetic advancements coming along at a rapid pace. This continues to make the field of aesthetic medicine exciting for the practitioner but the real value is for the consumers, our patients. There is no stopping the hands of time but we are able to turn back those hands a bit with these new technologies. What used to take weeks of recovery time for some procedures can now take virtually no downtime, what used to require narcotics or general anesthesia can now be completed with minimal or no pain control and what years ago would have been thought to be science fiction is now reality in this exciting ever changing field. The goal is to keep us looking outside as young as we feel on the inside ... we're getting there!