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Michael S. Kaminer, MD

Seminars in Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery

Introduction

MEDICINE is a fascinating field to work in. The blend of science, art, social interaction, emotion, intellectual curiosity, decision-making, and variety are all central factors in what makes medicine so special. But medicine is also facing very difficult times as part of society as a whole. Prices for health care continue to climb, insurance programs come and go, reimbursements to physicians drop, and paper work continues to grow almost exponentially. Many physicians feel over-worked and underpaid.

So why is it that given all the negatives happening around us in medicine, the fields of Dermatology and Dermatologic/Cosmetic Surgery remain so enjoyable to work in? The answer to this question is clearly multifactorial, including lifestyle, intellectual, and reimbursement reasons. But one of the most exciting aspects of these fields is the ever-evolving world of technology and new information that seems to come at us at a rapid clip.

New devices and products hit the market almost daily. New techniques or modifications of existing procedures are in the literature on a regular basis. The amount of new information in Dermatology and Dermatologic/Cosmetic Surgery is staggering, and the intellectual curiosity and capacity of these fields is at times mind-boggling. We use devices today (ie, lasers) without giving them a second thought, but the technology and the wisdom of our colleagues to determine how best to use those devices are what enable us to use them so freely.

This issue of *Seminars in Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery* is intended to give the reader a glimpse into what the future may hold. Much of the information and technology described in this issue has either just come into use, or hasn't yet become part of mainstream Dermatology and Dermatologic/Cosmetic Surgery. The topics range from a discussion of new understandings about the cosmetic surgery patient as an individual, to devices and materials such as diode lasers, light sources, photodynamic therapy, radiofrequency induced tissue tightening, microdroplet techniques for injecting silicone, and the use of botulinum toxin B to eliminate wrinkles.

It is imperative that we as physicians exercise caution in evaluating new devices and procedures. Manufacturers also share in the responsibility of presenting balanced and accurate information to the physician as well as to the general public. False claims and hype have no place in the evolution of these fields, and we all share in the responsibility of policing ourselves. It is only through the honest and open sharing of information and data that we can ultimately evaluate with some objectivity the advances and products

coming to our field. This issue is intended to be part of that open discussion.

I would like to thank the contributors to this issue. They have given of themselves, and taken the time to openly present their experience and research, some of it before it has been polished for public consumption. In some ways, this is a glimpse into the scientific, exploratory, and investigative process. It is almost certain that a few years from now much more will be known about the issues presented in this journal, so

consider this a start . . . an open and honest start.

Michael S. Kaminer, MD
Assistant Clinical Professor of Dermatology
Yale Medical School

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medicine
(Dermatology)
Dartmouth Medical School
Guest Editor