

American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery • CHICAGO • SEPT. 18-21

PLASTIC SURGERY

SmartLifting is an innovative tool for multiple rejuvenation procedures

AESTHETIC SURGERY & MEDICINE staff attended this meeting

SmartLifting – disrupting the soft tissues between the subcutaneous plane and the SMAS – using a pulsed 1064 nm Nd:YAG laser may be an effective method for a number of procedures, including rhytidectomy, forehead lifts, neck lifts and certain peri-orbital rejuvenation procedures.

According to **Richard D. Gentile, MD**, from the Northeastern Ohio University College of Medicine in Youngstown, Ohio, the laser is both innovative and useful for facial rejuvenation procedures due to its ability

to work with fatty tissue and cauterize subcutaneous blood vessels. It is FDA approved for subcutaneous use, and can be reduced in power for the treatment of small or extremely superficial areas.

In performing a vertical vector face lift, the laser will cauterize vessels prior to the elevation of the facial flap, resulting in a drier work area. Skin tightening through tissue coagulation also occurs concurrently with the tissue separation.

SmartLifting, according to Gentile, also permits flap separation in areas normally considered troublesome, such

as the nasal labial folds and the corner of the mouth.

The laser, developed in Italy and origi-

nally available for European doctors more than 7 years ago, is now the center of a highly competitive field, Gentile said. ■

PERSPECTIVE:

SmartLifting is a promising technology which can be used adjunctively and might limit bleeding and postoperative bruising after facelift surgery. If SmartLifting can be shown to reduce bruising after facelifting (as seen in Dr. Gentile’s patients), it may accelerate the patient’s return to normal activities, and laser- induced skin tightening may improve overall results. Further research and prospective trials are necessary to determine if this technology provides sufficient long-term benefits to justify the additional equipment and expense.

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Director of Facial Plastic Surgery, The New York Eye & Ear Infirmary

PLASTIC SURGERY

Malar fat pad volume directly related to gender and BMI

AESTHETIC SURGERY & MEDICINE staff attended this meeting

Malar fat pad volume varies significantly between genders and is correlated to BMI, according to a presentation by **Jose Barrera, MD**, an instructor in the department of otolaryngology at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. Additionally, although the malar fat pad itself changes position between a neutral (non-smiling) and a smiling face, the volume is maintained consistently.

Barrera and other researchers con-

ducted the study on 11 patients using MRI to measure soft tissue dimensions. Four of the 11 patients were then asked to smile for a second set of MRI measurements. Thirty different volume measurements were collected, with non-smiling volumes compared to smiling

Mean malar fat pad volume for males in the study was 24.3 cm<sup>3</sup>, with females measuring 17.9 cm<sup>3</sup>. BMI correlated to malar fat pad volume with a Pearson coefficient of 0.76, according to the study.

Consolidation of the malar fat pad was evident while smiling, but the pad’s volume remained largely unchanged ( $P = .03$ ).

According to Barrera, it remains to be seen if changes in the BMI of any given subject would result in a change of malar fat pad volume.

The study shows a novel approach to evaluate the malar fat pad, helping understand the complexity of the pad and other dynamic structures in the face as changes occur with aging. ■

PLASTIC SURGERY

VeraFil saline implants provide reliable long-term soft tissue correction

AESTHETIC SURGERY & MEDICINE staff attended this meeting

A 20-patient study conducted by **James Newman, MD**, assistant clinical professor at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif., found use of the VeraFil saline implant (Evera Medical, Inc., Foster City, Calif.) to correct soft-tissue defects resulted in a satisfaction rate of more than 90%.

The VeraFil implant, described by Newman as novel, is a fluid-filled membrane containing a self-sealing internal valve. Aimed at replicating a natural feel, the implant resulted in significant improvements for 15 of 20 patients as judged by three independent parties at the 12-month postoperative mark. No complications, infections or extrusions occurred.

After the procedure, patients ranked the severity of bruising, pain and tenderness, as well as how close the implants came to the desired outcome. In addition, the primary surgeon ranked aesthetic improvements and technical aspects of the procedure while monitoring for any complications.

Real-time ultrasound and video clips helped evaluate the dynamic results of the procedures, confirming maintenance of volume correction during the 12-month postoperative period. ■

PLASTIC SURGERY

Thread lift results unacceptable in long-term analysis

AESTHETIC SURGERY & MEDICINE staff attended this meeting

Although short-term improvements may be achieved through use of a thread lift procedure, the long-term results are unsatisfactory and do not outweigh patient risk or discomfort, according to a presentation by **Rima Abraham, MD**.

Abraham described the short-term benefits as limited as most early improvements seen by thread lift patients which may be attributed primarily to post-procedural edema. The retrospective review examined 30 patients who received 31 thread lifts alone or in combination with other rejuvenation procedures centered on the brow, midface, jowl and neck. Eight of the patients only received thread lifts, nine received thread lifts with lipotransfer and 13 had thread lifts with other facial rejuvenation procedures.

Follow-up visits ranged from 12 to 30 months, with a mean of 20 months. Three blinded, board-certified facial plastic

surgeons were asked to evaluate the short- and long-term results, grading on a scale of zero to three – zero being no change, three being significant improvement. For comparison, researchers divided the patients into four groups, with a group of 10 lipotransfer-only patients serving as control.

All groups showed signs of significant

improvement after one month. The group that received only thread lifts saw deterioration in their results as the study continued on. All other groups maintained their results through the end of the study. The group of patients who received thread lifts with lipotransfers consistently saw better results than those who received thread lifts alone. ■

PERSPECTIVE

The thread lifting procedure is a classic example of a technique or technology being promoted by the company and utilized widely in a clinical setting before unbiased and blinded clinical research has demonstrated the procedure to be effective and long lasting. This appears to be an interesting study that fails to substantiate claims previously made in company-sponsored studies and is consistent with what we are now hearing from unbiased clinicians as long-term results as well as problems and complications become apparent. I would think that anyone considering thread lifting may want to take a second look at the procedure and determine whether enough clinical data is present to justify the procedure as a long-term method of cosmetic correction.

I am certain that additional research is being done but anyone considering the thread lifting procedure may want to wait for additional unbiased and non-sponsored studies to be presented in various scientific forums.

S. Randolph Waldman, MD

Aesthetic Surgery & Medicine Editorial Board member