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Tissue-Tightening Satisfaction with the GentleYAG®

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Introduction

As a plastic surgeon, you may be surprised to hear that surgery is often the last treatment option I recommend to my patients. Indeed, there are a variety of pharmaceutical, physioceutical, and technology-based alternatives that are designed to delay and possibly even eliminate the need for cosmetic surgery.

For example, there are multiple noninvasive technologies available today to address the issue of skin laxity. I have personal experience with most if not all of them. And while there are advantages and disadvantages to any treatment option, non-surgical tissue tightening has been shown to be both effective and an acceptable alternative to surgery for many of my patients.

This paper reports on my evaluation of the Candela GentleYAG (1064 nm Nd:YAG laser) for skin tightening.

Method

The subject of this study was a 40-year-old white female, skin type II. She had lax skin and has had excessive sun exposure in the past. She was treated three times using a 1064 nm laser at the following treatment parameters: 50 J/cm²—three passes on cheeks, jowls, and neck; 40 J/cm²—three passes on the forehead, 50 msec pulse duration, and a 10 mm spot size. Epidermal cooling was provided using Dynamic Cooling Device™ (DCD™) settings of 40/20/0. Topical anesthesia was not used prior to the laser treatment. Patients are not given cooling compresses after the laser treatment, as the goal is to maintain as much heat as possible in the skin to stimulate not only collagen contraction, but also collagen remodeling as well.

Results

The attached photography demonstrates the safety and efficacy of the laser treatments. In general, the treatments were well tolerated by the patient. She had skin tightening and secondary wrinkle reduction due to the skin tightening mostly in the cheek and jowl area. The patient was very happy with the results, especially since she is a very busy working mother. There was no down time in this procedure, and it took very little time out of her schedule.

Discussion

After using both radio frequency (RF) and near-infrared devices (IR), I have settled upon the GentleYAG as my treatment modality of choice for tissue tightening outside of the periorbital area. The GentleYAG has proven to be a fast, effective, and safe treatment option to provide my patients mild-to-moderate improvement in their skin laxity. It has also been effective in skin tightening in other areas of the body.

Patient comfort is another advantage in using the GentleYAG laser versus other technologies, although, admittedly, skin-tightening treatment is rarely totally pain free.

Unlike using RF energy to tighten the skin, 1064 nm energy appears to penetrate sufficiently to exhibit the equivalent if not superior tissue-tightening results without the accompanying risk of fat atrophy often associated with electrical resistance heating. The GentleYAG is definitely a much faster procedure. In fact, GentleYAG treatments can be delivered in a fraction of the time at a fraction of the cost versus RF.



Interestingly, near IR technology appears redundant to the Nd:YAG platform upon which it is offered. It puzzles me that a separate handpiece is offered (at an exorbitant price) on a 1064 nm laser than can already tighten the skin, as demonstrated by GentleYAG treatments. Regardless, the slow repetition rate and awkward handpiece of the IR device make treating skin laxity much slower and more tedious than necessary.

Setting expectations is critical with your patients. Short of surgery, there are no treatment options that can guarantee results—there will always be a percentage of your patients who exhibit little-to-no improvement. And while those percentages seem to be less with the GentleYAG—and overall satisfaction higher with the GentleYAG—when compared to the other technologies, patients still need to be consulted.



Figure 1. Pretreatment.



Figure 2. Post-treatment.

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Treatment parameters are subject to change—please consult your sales representative or clinical consultant, or visit www.mycandela.com to obtain current information regarding the use of your Candela device.

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