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Exclusive use of combination Q-switched and long pulsed YAG lasers in skin types I-V for the treatment of cutaneous hyperpigmentation and hypopigmentation

Background & Aim: Hyperpigmentation and hypopigmentation of the skin can be an adverse manifestation associated with a number of skin conditions. Trauma, acne, surgery, melasma and certain medications all have been sources of pigmentary changes. In this study, we evaluated the exclusive use of the Q-switched and long pulsed YAG lasers in the treatment of both hyperpigmentation and hypopigmentation.

Study: Eleven patients with skin types I-V presented treatment of hyperpigmentation and hypopigmentation. Patients were treated with the Q-switched and long pulsed YAG lasers in a successive manner at the time of the procedure. Treatments were administered on a monthly basis, undergoing an average of 6-10 laser treatments 4-6 weeks apart. Low level energies were used to minimize post-therapy adverse effects. After the series of treatments, patients outcome was graded by a blinded observer judging baseline and post-treatment photographs.

Results: A total of 11 patients were treated. Seven of the patients had melasma, two had hyperpigmentation, two had hypopigmentation and one had both hyperpigmentation and hypopigmentation. All patients tolerated well with the procedures with mild transient erythema being the only adverse effects. There was an average 79% reduction in melasma with over 70% of the patients achieving 90% reduction. The 3 hyperpigmentation cases had an 87% resolution of their hyperpigmentation and there was a 73% reduction in hypopigmentation in the 3 cases.

Conclusion: The Q-switched and long pulsed YAG laser combination is an excellent therapeutic approach for the treatment of hyper- and hypopigmentation. Low level energies greatly enhance the outcome by minimizing adverse effects. All patients' skin types can be successfully treated.

Biography

Dr. Bakus received his Ph.D. in Bio-Laser Research through the Department of Physics at the Illinois Institute of Technology, after receiving a Masters in Radiobiology at DePaul University. He did post-graduate work in laser-tissue interaction at Northwestern University's Department of Dermatology and then as a researcher in the Department of Biomedical Engineering. For more than 20 years, he has been involved in laser skin studies.

Dr. Bakus has been Co-Director of Clinical Research at the Physicians Laser and Dermatology Institute, participating in and overseeing all ongoing projects. He is an author of multiple medical articles and chapters, and has been involved in developing patents and teaching laser therapy at various medical seminars around the world.

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