

Income from non-supervised laser hair removal in Texas faces permanent reduction

Starting November 30, 2004, the Texas Board of Medical Examiners (TBME) officially declared laser hair removal a “medical procedure” that must be supervised by a medical doctor. Laser hair removal specialists, including some that have been providing the technology since it was first introduced to the state about seven years ago, are unhappy with the new rules and are crying foul. They say dermatologists are trying to make the move a safety issue but they are actually jealous of lucrative businesses they see scattered around urban-area malls, and they want some of the action for themselves.

Bennett Holmes, who runs Hair Removal of Houston, at a shopping center in Katy, told *Houston Chronicle* reporter Polly Ross Hughes that this is “A turf war over money. They’ve redefined hair removal,” she said. “It was never the practice of medicine.”

Ms. Holmes, who has been practicing hair removal for the past 24 years, says many of her current laser clients are doctors and other medical professionals. “This is like a hairdresser with scissors in their hand,” she added. “What if you had to go to the doctor’s office to get your hair cut?”

The new TBME rules say laser hair removal can only be performed outside of a doctor’s office if a medical doctor, a physician’s assistant or an advanced-practice nurse is supervising on the site at all times. The medical staffer must examine

every client before laser hair removal, and must sign their charts, the rules say.

Medical doctors and advanced health practitioners involved in laser hair removal must receive 24 hours of initial training and ongoing annual training, according to the rules. Anyone practicing laser hair removal as they have done since 1997 — without a medical license — could be prosecuted for a third-degree felony if they fail to adhere to the new law.

Dr. Donald Patrick, the TBME’s executive director, says laser hair removal has to be restricted to doctors because the U.S. Food and Drug Administration allow only doctors to buy the lasers that are used for this purpose. Hair removal by electrolysis is not affected by the new rules.

Dr. Patrick said plastic surgeons and dermatologists protested the “hypocrisy” of doctors selling the lasers to non-doctors who were not supervised by licensed medical practitioners.

He said he suspects that the new law will increase the expense of the procedure through higher overhead costs.

The *Chronicle* reports that the cost of “permanent” laser removal currently varies, but treatment of underarm hair in Houston might cost \$79 and require three to five treatments. Ms. Holmes, says, “That’s considerably more affordable than electrolysis, which costs \$15 to \$25 a treatment but may require half an hour of treatment a week and could take two years.” Obviously the higher demand for laser removal makes the business more lucrative.

Dr. Patrick says, “I know doctors are

dying to do it. We had a bunch show up at our meeting. They convinced us it was a safety issue.”

Dallas dermatologist Dr. George Wooming said people have been injured by laser hair removal, although he notes the injuries involved physicians and non-physicians alike. “Enforcement will become a greater issue in the future,” said Dr. Wooming, “when laser technology can be used for multiple purposes, such as removing red and brown spots.”

The largest laser hair removal chain in Texas, the San Antonio-based Smooth Solutions, will remain exempt from the new rules until the owner’s lawsuit against the TBME is settled. Four Smooth Solutions, located in different parts of the state, have been performing as many as 50,000 laser hair removal treatments each year since 1997, without medical staff supervision. At the \$79 per treatment figure quoted by the *Chronicle*, 50,000 underarm laser treatments a year for seven years would, by *Hair Route*’s calculation, add up to about \$27,650,000, or just a shade under \$4,000,000 a year. Now that’s really Smooth!

Mouse model offers new hope for alopecia areata sufferers

A five-year study into the genetics of the autoimmune skin disease known as alopecia areata has resulted in the construction of a mouse model that will give remarkable new insight to human hair loss.

The National Alopecia Areata Foundation says the results of this study, published in the October issue of the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* (a publication of the Society for Investigative Dermatology) will bring renewed hope for a cure to this condition, which affects more than 4.7 million people in the U.S. and approximately 1.7 percent of the world population overall. Researchers identified a virtually identical mouse model for human adult onset alopecia areata, and were able to reproduce the disease for exploring treatments.

The lead investigator in the study, Dr. John P. Sundberg, is a veterinary anatomic pathologist who has focused on genetic-based skin and hair diseases in mutant laboratory mice for almost 20 years. Speaking on behalf of his research team at The Jackson Laboratory, in Bar Harbor, Dr. Sundberg said, “Our mouse

THE WAY WE WERE Electrolysis 25 Years Ago

NEW YORK, 1979 — We sincerely hope that the old idea of moving the needle around in the follicle or placing the needle tip at various levels during current application is not revived because of the new emphasis on the importance of isthmal [bulge] destruction. Such procedures, which have long been tried without improving our basic technique, may make the current action too diffuse and spread too much action to the surface. It has happened in the past with single needle galvanic and with short wave treatments. A correct insertion with the tip of the needle held steadily at the bottom of the follicle while the short wave current flows is still the most desirable technique.

— Gordon Blackwell
Electrolysis Digest, Vol. XXVI, No. 4

model has proven to be very useful as a preclinical model to test new treatments for alopecia areata before being used in humans.”

Alopecia areata, affecting both males and females, is a highly unpredictable disease that results in the loss of hair on the scalp and elsewhere on the body, explained Dr. Sundberg. “Our study further provided the opportunity to use newly available gene array technology to study the disease’s molecular mechanisms.”

Data revealed that the disease has a complicated genetic basis that involves four or more genes, including those involved in susceptibility to the disease and genes that regulate pigmentation of the skin and hair.

“We now have the data for analyzing the genetic candidates responsible for alopecia areata, as well as insights into other conditions, such as thyroid disorders,” said Dr. Sundberg. “Screenings in mice and humans can lead to greater understanding of this disease and other complex polygenic diseases.”

French sex offenders to get hair loss/hair growth drugs

Early in November 2004, France launched a pilot project that offers rapists and pedophiles drugs that will inhibit their sex drive. The move, announced by France’s justice minister Dominique Perben, is part of a plan to reduce the population of the nation’s prisons, where 8,200 men (22 percent of male inmates) are convicted sex offenders. Three out of four of that number was jailed for crimes of pedophilia.

The two drugs that France proposes to use in its experiment, leuproreline acetate and cyproterone acetate, have both been associated with “hair loss” and “hair growth” side effects. Both of the drugs are dangerous to the male fetus; and though certain formulations are available in Canada and in parts of South America and Europe, both of the drugs are commercially unavailable in the U.S.

The antiandrogen, cyproterone acetate (CPA) was first used experimentally in 1965 to treat hirsutism and to reduce excessive sex drive and pronounced sexual aggression in men. In Canada, a cyproterone (systemic) drug is prescribed for advanced prostatic carcinoma, and a formulation of cyproterone with estradiol, called Diane 35, is indicated for women with severe acne or hirsutism. Although

the latter has a composition similar to that of a combined oral contraceptive, it is not authorized for that purpose.

Leuproreline (or leuprolide) acetate is a gonadotrophin-releasing hormone agonist. Like CPA, it is used for the treatment of prostate cancer in men; also for the treatment of severe female hirsutism caused by hyperandrogenism; and for the treatment of severe androgenetic alopecia in women of childbearing age.

As with all systemic antiandrogens, serious side effects will develop in a male embryo of a pregnant user.

A known effect of leuproreline acetate and cyproterone acetate is the reduction of erections and, to a lesser extent, the reduction of mental desire for sex. In the 1990s, French sex offenders who had served their sentences were offered antidepressants and hormones such as estrogen, but these substances are now ruled out because they cause irreversible feminization.

Sweden, Denmark and Canada currently offer drugs, in combination with psychotherapy, on a voluntary basis to repeat sex offenders after they have left prison. The effects of the two drugs used on 48 Danish sex offenders since 1989 — Androcure, a female sexual hormone, and Enanton, a prostate cancer drug — are said to wear off between three and six months after the end of treatment.

France’s two-year trial will be launched in January 2005. Forty-eight repeat offenders will be offered counseling and treatment while using one of the two

antiandrogens. The French minister said: “With the drugs, these people will be able to control urges which they often describe as impossible to resist.” But he stressed that France was not envisaging offering a system of full-scale chemical castration. “The drugs that will be used have no irreversible effects,” he said. However, specialists warned that not enough is known about the possible side-effects of the so-called antiandrogen drugs

Britain’s top two merge and promote needle electrolysis

On October 1, 2004, the British Association of Electrolysis (BAE) and the British Institute of Electrolysis (BIE) became a single, merged entity operating under the banner, British Institute & Association of Electrolysis Ltd. (BIAE). The resulting organization becomes *the* specialist body in permanent hair removal in Britain today.

The Institute of Electrolysis was founded in 1945 with the object of providing a central organization for the electrolysis profession, and as a means of protecting its members with a system of examination and the issuance of a certificate (Diploma in Remedial Electrolysis), denoting competency and skill in the field. The publication of a register of qualified operators, and a mandatory insurance plan, was implemented to protect the public.

The BAE was formed in 1956 by a small clutch of British electrologists who registered their group as a non-aligned,



HAIR FLUFF

Japanese women want Beckham Mohican pubes

According to the *Mainichi Daily News*, growing numbers of Japanese women are modeling their pubic hair to look like the haircuts of English soccer player David Beckham.

Apparently there are three favorite cuts adopted by fans of the 29-year-old rock star, teen idol and “world’s most famous footballer:” ‘Popular Beckhams’ involve shaving and styling the hair into a Mohican; ‘Soft Beckhams,’ which allow the hair to grow freely but curl back to form a natural peak; and ‘Hardcore Beckhams,’ that require the wearer to dye the top of the Mohican an eye-catching color.

An office worker named Yuri, told the Tokyo newspaper that the fad had “opened up a new arena of rivalry.” She said, “Pubic hairstyling can make the difference for a girl when she’s competing with another girl whose looks are about the same as hers.”

Story filed: Tokyo, Japan, 10:10 am Thursday 23rd January 2003

non-profit making, independent organization going under the name of The Association of Electrolysis. The motivation to get the association started came with the realization that demand for hair removal services was on the increase, whilst basic beauty therapy training programs of the day lacked the specialized instruction electrology students needed to fully understand the complexities of body and facial hair growth.

Within the next 18 years the Association achieved national status, and its extended syllabus — with emphasis on anatomy and physiology and a strict ruling on the number of hours of practical, closely supervised instruction — was introduced into selected technical colleges. In 1974 the name of the organization was changed to British Association of Electrolysis, Ltd.

The overwhelming majority vote from members of both associations has resulted in the formation of the United Kingdom's largest association devoted to permanent hair removal.

Announcing the amalgamation of the two associations, press secretary of the BIAE, Janet Ellard-Smith said, "I have been a member of both organizations for over 20 years and this day has been long hoped-for. It is a fantastic opportunity to promote needle-type electrolysis — the one and only proven method of perma-

nent hair removal — to both therapists and the general public alike. We hope to attract many new members who will be interested in this stimulating prospect."

The BIAE is currently holding examinations for entrance to the new organization, for all lecturers and students who are serious about permanent hair removal and wish to offer superior electrolysis skills.

The official amalgamation date was Oct. 1, 2004, and a new board will be voted in at the Annual General Meeting of the BIAE in April, 2005. The current caretaker board is made up of former committee members from both previous organizations, with Moyra Radbourne and Marianne Carr as joint chairpersons.

For more information about BIAE: contact Nicky Wilsher, 40 Parkfield Road, Ickenhams, Middlesex, UB10 8LW, email: sec@electrolysis.co.uk, website: www.electrolysis.co.uk.

Stem cells may soon provide "natural" heart pacemakers

Scientists at Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, together with US colleagues, have successfully transplanted embryonic stem cells into the hearts of pigs, where they performed as "natural" heart pacemakers. Researchers believe this technology could replace the electronic pacemakers currently used to treat humans

with irregular heartbeats. The process was described in the September issue of the journal *Nature Biotechnology*.

Dr. Lior Gepstein, who led the team, says the stem cells were from donated human embryos, and chemicals were used to coax them to grow into standard heart muscle cells. Some of the cells were seen to beat spontaneously in the same way as healthy heart muscle, and the scientists isolated these cells and injected them into the hearts of pigs with abnormally slow heart rates.

In 11 out of 13 pigs, the injected cells produced their own heart rhythm. In five of the pigs, this was limited to short bouts, but in six of the pigs the beat was sustained and resembled the pattern of a normal beating heart.

In healthy hearts, groups of special heart cells make the organ beat regularly by stimulating the heart muscle cells to contract. In people where this mechanism fails, an electronic, battery-powered pacemaker is implanted to keep the heartbeat going. These devices may need replacing and some electrical equipment, such as certain mobile phones, can interfere with the way they work. In comparison, "natural" pacemakers made from the body's own cells would need no power source and would become part of the heart.

Dr. Gepstein says, "Our proof-of-concept study suggests the use of excitable cell grafts as a biological alternative to implantable devices," but they added that "several obstacles must be overcome before this strategy can reach the clinic."

"There is a theoretical risk that the cells could become cancerous or that the body would reject the cells," Dr. Gepstein said. "However, embryonic stem cells have the advantage over other cell candidates for repairing hearts — they can be made in unlimited numbers."

FCEA president retires, and new president takes office

The Federation of Canadian Electrolysis Associations has announced the retirement of its president, Michelle Kaminski, who has held that high office for four consecutive years — the maximum allowable term in that position. During her tenure, Ms. Kaminski worked diligently in the interests of the FCEA and its members, and her efforts are greatly appreciated.

In addition to her many achievements for the FCEA, Ms. Kaminski is highly

Did You Know?

The most severe and most devastating example of hypertrichosis is found on individuals who are born with *congenital erythropoietic porphyria* (CEP), a very rare condition — stemming from an overproduction of porphyrin-heme [a pigmenting agent] in the bone marrow and blood cells — that makes CEP sufferers extremely photosensitive.

Beginning in childhood, the slightest exposure to sunlight causes skin eruptions and excessive hair growth over the victim's entire head and body. The eruptions invariably lead to skin blistering, cracking and lesion mutilation, especially on the nose, ears, and hands. Skin-tightening around the mouth makes the lips contract around the gums, causing the canine teeth to look elongated — all symptoms that are characteristic of the legendary werewolf.

During the Dark Ages, things that were not readily understood were things to be feared. Men who possessed the ability to transform themselves into a wolf, who came out only in the dark of night, with their whole body covered with hair and their teeth grown into long fangs, were something to be despised and destroyed. Such was once the fate of those poor souls afflicted with porphyria.

regarded for her efforts to gain legislative recognition for electrologists in her home-province of Manitoba. As past-president of the FCEA, Ms. Kaminski will serve on the board for one more year.

At its annual meeting in Calgary, Alberta, Oct. 1, 2004, the FCEA Board of Directors elected Gail MacDonald to the post of President of the FCEA, effective Nov. 24, 2004. In addition, Verdyne Gilchrist was elected Vice President, Tanya Sokolowski as Treasurer and Carol Cochrane as Secretary. The Association's members and board congratulate Ms. MacDonald and the entire executive and wish them success in their new challenging responsibilities.

FDA goes after the Gold

Subsequent to a US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspection of Rejuvenu International, Ltd. in August 2004, Mr. Hubert Lee Cole received a warning letter from the Agency regarding various violations in the manufacturing and marketing of the hair removal products called 'Super Phaser GOLD System,' and 'Transcutaneous Patch.' Mr. Cole is Chairman and CEO of Rejuvenu, the parent company of International Hair Removal Systems (IHRS) — which makes and distributes the two products

that are being investigated by the FDA.

According to the FDA, its investigators have determined that the Super Phaser Gold System promoted by IHRS — using tweezers and continuous transdermal probes or hands-free transcutaneous patches to remove hair — “is adulterated” and the methods and facilities and/or the controls used for its manufacture, packing, storage, or installation “are not in conformity with applicable requirements.” Ten significant violations, not intended to be an all-inclusive list of deficiencies at this facility, were identified by the FDA.

The Agency's warning letter also stated that the IHRS device was misbranded, indicating that a notice or other information regarding a “new intended use of the device” was not provided to the FDA, and the Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) has not cleared patch or probe epilators for any indication.

The warning letter also stated Mr. Cole does not have FDA clearance to market the devices as advertised: “Appropriate data has not been submitted to support claims of no risk of infection, changes of pigmentation, no bruising, no scabbing, or no scarring, or that the procedure is painless.”

“We have requested evidence to support these claims on several occasions, but no information has been received from

your firm,” says the FDA letter.

Mr. Cole was given fifteen working days to notify the FDA of the specific steps taken to correct the noted violations or state the reason for the delay and the time within which the corrections will be completed. “Failure to promptly correct these deviations may result in regulatory action without further notice. These actions include, but are not limited to, actions for seizure, injunction and/or civil money penalties.”

But threatening letters from the FDA and other authorities such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) are “old hat” for Mr. Cole, who has been dancing around these agencies for a long time. On July 20, 1999 the FDA sent a letter concerning promotional claims that were being made for a device called TD-829 Hair Removal Machine. And on April 2, 2001 the Agency wrote: “Continued promotion of the Super-Phaser Gold System and Transcutaneous Patch for claims of permanent hair removal misbrands and adulterates your device within the meaning of sections 502(o) and 501(f)(1)(B) of the Act, respectively.”

The electrolysis community will be anxious to see if the latest “FDA warning” has any long-lasting effect on IHRS's *modus operandi*.

AEA's 2004 LAS VEGAS CONVENTION WINNERS



(left) Clement Beaumont, president of The Dectro Group, and Johanne Fortier (right) director of Dectro's Apilus Academy, presented Suzanne Parks of Alameda, CA, with a new Apilus Cleo epilator — the Grand Raffle Prize at the AEA's 2004 Convention in Las Vegas.



Sandra Jackson of Howell, NJ, was the 2004 recipient of Ballet's Gold Probe Award, presented by Jim Paisner at the AEA Convention in Las Vegas.