

He's Just Beaming

Doc Extols Virtues Of Laser Therapy For Chronic Skin Conditions

By Doctor Gifford Jones

How many patients receive ineffective treatment when they could be cured by a less-known technique? Probably tens of thousands.

I recently spent a day at a Meditech Conference in Toronto listening to experts discuss dermatological and wound ulcers that were resistant to treatment. I saw startling photos showing how Low Intensity Laser Therapy (LILT) can cure these conditions.

An old joke in the medical fraternity is that dermatology is the best specialty; patients never die nor get better. But it's not so funny if you suffer from a chronic skin condition that doesn't improve.

Year after year, these patients are prescribed a variety of pills, creams and other treatments with no significant effect. As a dermatology professor at the University of Toronto admitted, "We often have no idea what we're doing."

Dr. Fred Kahn, director of Meditech Laser and Rehabilitation Centre in Toronto, presented pictures of patients suffering from psoriasis, allergic contact dermatitis, acne, ringworm, impetigo, herpes lesions and warts that faded away with LILT therapy after 5-10 treatments.

More dramatic was the effect of LILT on chronic ulcers. Patients with diabetes had developed frightful-looking leg and foot ulcers due to atherosclerosis (hardening of arteries). LILT helped these patients, as well as those with ulcers resulting from injuries, chemical and thermal burns .

Slava Kim, therapy department manager at Meditech, outlined the problems associated with treating ulcers, why doctors should stop packing ulcers with tight dressings and how it's more effective to elevate the leg -- and leave ulcers exposed to the air -- accompanied by daily irrigation with antiseptic solutions. And how laser treatment has a major effect on healing.

Two million Canadians have diabetes, of which 150,000 develop leg ulcers. There are also 50,000 Canadians with spinal cord lesions. Half will develop ulcers.

WON'T COVER COST

The economic cost of caring for ulcers is appalling. Dr. Gail Woodbury, of the University of Western Ontario, reports that the average cost of treatment in a health care facility is \$27,000. Kim, on the other hand, says it's \$1,000 at Meditech! Yet our health-care system does not cover the cost of treatment at this facility.

What makes LILT so effective? Dr. Mary Dyson, professor emeritus of physiology at King's College, University of London, England, and an international authority on wound healing, reports that LILT jump-starts the body's natural healing process, delivering energy to tissues that's transformed into biochemical energy. The result is increased blood supply and accelerated healing time.

Why don't more doctors and hospitals use LILT? It's a question health ministers should be asking.

Last year, I wrote about the benefits of LILT in treating sciatica, painful joints and other orthopedic problems. One of my patients could walk only a few blocks without severe pain in her ankle. After using LILT, she walks without pain.

I hope this column helps patients with skin lesions who cannot find relief from dermatologists. And those with ulcers that won't heal.

For more information, call 1-888-557-4004. I'm also interested to know the results of LILT.