



■ Are Patients Satisfied with Laser Hair Removal? A Look at Data from a Retrospective Study (1998-2004)

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In 2005, we surveyed all of our patients who benefited from laser hair removal at Forever Laser Institut between 1998 and 2004 (the total number of patients contacted was 1,250). The purpose of this study was to analyze patient satisfaction with laser hair removal treatments, to identify potential trends in patient care and possible improvements in therapeutic protocols.

Patients were sent a questionnaire with a visual scale (0-10) for overall satisfaction. Patients were also asked to include specific qualitative comments.

TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY

Male and female patients who were surveyed had undergone treatment with one or more of the following lasers, depending on the patient's skin type and hair thickness:

- Candela GentleLASE alexandrite laser, 750 nm, 3 ms, 10-30 J/cm².
- Candela GentleYAG Nd:YAG laser, 1064 nm, 3 ms, 25-40 J/cm².

The laser was chosen based on the patient's skin type: GentleLASE was used on patients with Fitzpatrick skin types I-III, whereas GentleYAG was preferred for patients with Fitzpatrick skin types IV-VI.

Furthermore, GentleYAG was sometimes used for the initial treatment, in particular if the patient had very dark, coarse and dense hair, or if the matrix of the hair was expected to be deep. After a few GentleYAG treatments, that coarse hair typically became softer and lighter, and the treatment was then finished using GentleLASE. Switching from one laser to the other was also helpful when the treatment's progress appeared slow.

The typical parameters used were the following:

- For light skin types: 18-mm spot,

18-20 J/cm², DCD set to 40-30 (alexandrite)

- For skin types III: 18-mm spot, 12-16 J/cm², DCD set to 40-30 (alexandrite)
- For skin types IV and darker: 18-mm spot, 10-12 J/cm², DCD set to 40-30 (alexandrite); 12-mm spot, 30-35 J/cm², DCD set to 40-20 (Nd:YAG).

After the treatment, patients had a soothing lotion applied to avoid inflammation. This lotion was used from 2003 on, but was not used in the bikini area or underarms; a corticosteroid-containing cream was preferred in these cases.

In the 15 days immediately following each treatment, the patient was welcomed back at Forever Laser Institut for a free touch-up of the entire treated area. This appeared to be the optimal method of achieving highest patient satisfaction in terms of hair reduction after every treatment.

A LOOK AT THE DATA

The results of the study included responses from 349 patients. Of these: 19 patients provided comments but did not

complete the visual scale. Of the remaining respondents:

- 36 patients scored the results at 5.5 or below (10.3%)
- 294 at 6 or above (84.2%)
- 229 patients scored the results at 8 or above (65.6%).

The graph below illustrates these results.

HIGH SATISFACTION

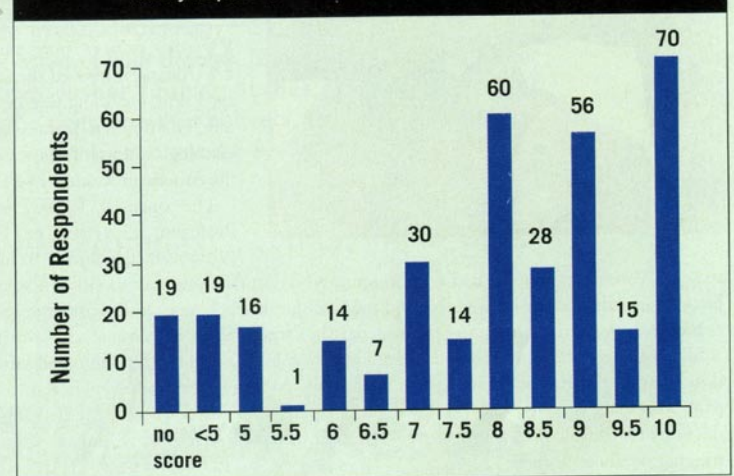
Overall patient satisfaction with hair removal treatments was high, whether

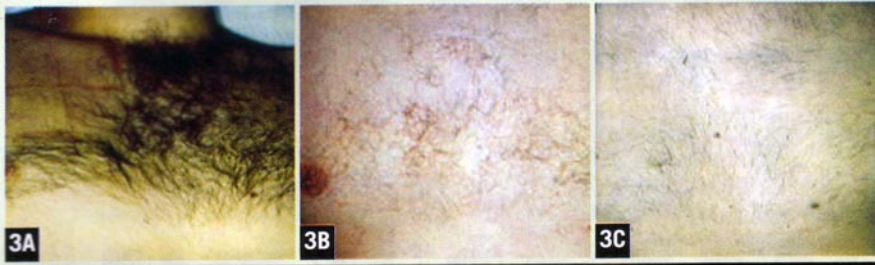
WHILE LASER HAIR REMOVAL REMAINS THE TREATMENT OPTION OF CHOICE FOR LONG-TERM HAIR REDUCTION, COMBINATION TREATMENTS ARE OPTIMAL.

looking at the 84.2% of scores higher than 6, or at the 65.6% of scores higher than 8. Satisfaction seemed to be highest for hair removal of the body (whether legs or backs), and lowest for the facial areas.

These results illustrate one of the limitations of the laser hair removal methodology: hair growth stimulation on some areas of the face, in particular

FIGURE 2. An overall look at hair removal satisfaction (based on 349 survey responses).





FIGURES 3A to 3C: This patient underwent laser hair removal with good results. Photo 3A show the patient before treatment, and 3B and 3C are 1 month after one treatment and 1 year after one treatment, respectively.

the chin. This stimulation remains frequent and well documented, although unexplained.

A second limitation of laser hair

removal is that the treatment of tanned skin remains a concern. It is important to note that no tanned patient was treated, even with GentleYAG.

Finally, laser hair removal remained of limited use for patients with blond hair, as is a typical complaint with hair removal.

Due to these various limitations, while laser hair removal remains the treatment option of choice for patients looking for long-term hair reduction, it is optimally complemented by other treatment modalities such as electrolysis, especially for the face. ■

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