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Clinical Roundtable Supplement

TriActive LaserDermology Improves Cellulite Treatment Outcomes

Editor's Note: The following Clinical Roundtable was moderated by Mitchel Goldman, M.D., who has a scientific study of the TriActive pending publication and has successfully incorporated the device into his aesthetic practice. Dr. Goldman and his colleagues share their practical experience with this exciting new body shaping technology.

What excites you most about the TriActive?

Kathryn Frew, M.D. – The TriActive is the first laser system that we know is capable of treating cellulite and showing positive results. We are also confident that the results are not just temporary, based on our studies. After going through a series of 16 sessions, twice a week, patients can expect a reduction of cellulite, with more firming and less dimpling than they would see otherwise.

Bruce Katz, M.D. – The TriActive is the first laser that has been shown to actually do something for cellulite. This is a big innovation. The fact that we're actually treating cellulite and improving it is great on its own. But this is truly the first laser device that has been found to be effective.

Robert Adrian, M.D. – The TriActive is a really nice addition to our medical spa therapies. It is non-invasive and patients like it. The TriActive is a device that is useful for many women who are really bothered by some superficial cellulite that is untreatable by any other method. These women are not ready for liposuction or do not want to undergo liposuction. In addition, these women don't mind coming in for a

series of treatments in a spa setting. Most patients enjoy treatment very much. They find it very relaxing.

Mitchel Goldman, M.D. – Patients are seeing a very nice — and at times, dramatic — improvement in the appearance of cellulite, including their shape. The only caveat is that this improvement really does not become apparent until 8 to 12 treatments. Therefore, my staff has to act as a cheerleader to motivate the patient to complete a series of sessions.



Mitchel Goldman, M.D.

How does the TriActive work?

Dr. Frew – The TriActive consists of three components: six near-infrared diode lasers, a localized cooling system and a rhythmic intake massage. You can turn some of the components on or off, but we leave them all on during cellulite treatment.

“The TriActive is a device that is useful for many women who are really bothered by some superficial cellulite that is untreatable by any other method.”

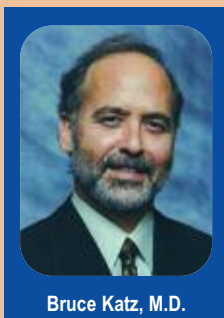
Of the three components, we feel that the laser renders the most effect. The laser light stimulates the microcirculation, whereas the cooling is for reducing fluid retention. The massage is for lymphatic drainage. We think there is synergy when these three components work together.

Endermologie is via suction, which helps lymphatic drainage as well. But by adding laser, we are able to stimulate microcirculation, so you help re-establish the normal distance between the fat cells and the blood vessels. Thus, cellulite is reduced. When cellulite is due to hormonal or hereditary problems, you end up with engorged fat cells. This results in increased distance between the fat cells and the blood vessels.

Dr. Katz – Dr. Frew and I conducted a study of the TriActive involving ten women with grade III to grade V cellulite. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effect of the laser component. The laser was used on only one half of the body, but suction and cooling were used on both sides. Patients were treated twice a week, for eight weeks. We primarily treated the thighs, buttocks and abdomen. The radius of the limbs was measured before the study and we took digital photos. Measurement and photos were also taken after the ninth treatment and after completing the 16 sessions, then three months later to see if the improvement persisted.

“The side of the body with laser therapy showed improvement in about 85% of the women, compared to only about 17% of women who showed improvement without laser.”

The side of the body with laser therapy showed improvement in about 85% of the women, compared to only about 17% of women who showed improvement without laser. At the three month follow-up, the two sides maintained their percentage increase. It is obvious from our study that the laser is the most important component of the TriActive. However, we don't know for certain how the six diode lasers on the hand-piece are working. But the theory about cellulite is that there is some type of obstruction of lymph and blood flow around the fat cells. The laser diodes are probably freeing up that obstruction so that the fat cells are not bloated the way they normally are, which causes a dimpling of the skin. The fat cells are able to shrink back to their normal size.



Bruce Katz, M.D.



Before Tx

After TriActive treatments

Any other study results?

Michael Gold, M.D. – Several clinical studies have shown that around 80% of patients achieve significant changes in cellulite with the TriActive. Everyone we've treated likes the outcomes. Compared to the days of plain endermologie, this is a big leap forward.

We did a study of ten patients treated with the TriActive two or three times a week for a total of 15 sessions. These patients have now been followed for several months. Preliminarily, everyone improved in the reduction in the appearance of their cellulite. This is exciting. We also have photographic documentation to back up these findings.

“Several clinical studies have shown that around 80% of patients achieve significant changes in cellulite with the TriActive.”

Dr. Goldman – *The Journal of the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery* has accepted my study of the TriActive system for publication. The study basically measured the clinical appearance of cellulite over eight treatment sessions, spaced one week apart. We observed a 30% to 40% improvement in the appearance of cellulite. About 20 women participated in the study. We treated the thighs and buttocks. There were no adverse effects at all from treatment.

What indications are you treating with the TriActive?

Paul Zipperlen – As president of The Spa at the Village, in Colleyville, Texas, I'm really encouraged by the results we're seeing from our clients. They love the system. They are getting great results from the standpoint of reduced cellulite on their legs and body. The firming and toning is just phenomenal. The biggest enjoyment for us is to see the excitement from our customers knowing that we have the TriActive. This is a system for cellulite treatment that's been needed by the public for quite awhile. It's just wonderful.

Dr. Frew – When treating cellulite, we use all three components of the TriActive. The body protocol for treating cellulite is 30 minutes of treatment. We also use the same protocol for toning of arms. In addition, protocols are being developed for pre- and post-liposuction. With suction, you do not want to induce bruising.

When performing facial rejuvenation with the TriActive, you do not use the cooling component. The treatment protocol can vary. You can do it once a week for about 6 to 12 sessions, depending on how much improvement a patient wishes to maintain. Sessions can also be scheduled twice a week for the same number of sessions. For facial treatment, patients can expect a refreshed look to the face and a slight lifting. We're hoping the effect is like laser photorejuvenation, where you might achieve some stimulation later on.

“For facial treatment, patients can expect a refreshed look to the face and a slight lifting.”

The facial handpiece differs from the body handpiece in that the body handpiece has the cooling and six laser diodes, whereas the facial handpiece is much smaller and has only one laser diode and massage, but no cooling. The facial handpiece is too small to accommodate a cooling component. But even if the handpiece contained cooling, I don't think it would make much of a difference in the face. With the body, cooling treatment is for reduction of fluid retention, which most people acquire from gravity. You don't tend to have this



Kathryn Frew, M.D.

problem in the face. Maintenance treatments are also important because whatever factors cause cellulite are still present.

“TriActive treatment immediately following liposuction gives us more even and smoother sculpting.”

Dr. Goldman – I commonly use the TriActive one week after liposuction. I like it because I think it improves healing, as well as decreasing any irregularity from the liposuction procedure. We usually schedule four sessions of the TriActive at one week intervals. We include it in the price of the liposuction. Sometimes I'll actually use the TriActive at the end of the liposuction procedure, when the patient is still numb. I place a sterile glove over the TriActive treatment head because you want to avoid aspirating any of the liposuction fluid into the machine. TriActive treatment immediately following liposuction gives us more even and smoother sculpting.

Mona Sappenfield – I'm owner, president and founder of Mona Spa and Laser Center. We're headquartered in Memphis, Tenn., where we have one location. We also have two other sites, one in Jackson, Miss., and the other in Mattawan, Mich. About 80% of our business is laser treatment. Furthermore, we have a growing group of customers who would like something more



than a facial. So we've taken our luxury signature facial and added the TriActive. This improves blood circulation in the face and neck, and provides a lymphatic massage, which helps tighten and firm skin. The session lasts 75 minutes, for which we charge \$150. A package of six treatments, twice a week, costs \$800. The combination therapy is great for a special event that is only hours away.

“The TriActive can also be successfully combined with other modalities, such as Botox, facial fillers and mesotherapy.”

Theresa Clements – I am director of the spa at Ponte Vedra Inn and Club, a five diamond resort (AAA designation) in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. Everyone recognizes cellulite treatment with the TriActive. But the TriActive also incorporates a unique handpiece for facial treatments, which we have found to be popular as well. In fact, the facial procedure is so popular at our spa that we decided to make a signature treatment out of it. We promote it as an instant facelift. We work with John Harris, M.D., who was formerly head of plastic surgery at Mayo Clinic, and now has his own practice in Jacksonville, Fla. We performed a facial on him at our spa, but only on one half of his face. Dr. Harris was astounded by the results.

We call our facial procedure “Roll Back the Clock.” It is a treatment to receive before going to your college reunion, for instance, or a wedding or any other place where you want to look outstanding. By scheduling multiple sessions, the collagen level starts to build underneath your skin. When undergoing as many as 16 treatments, the effect lasts a lot longer. Sessions can be as frequent as every other day.

Dr. Goldman – Patients love the facial handpiece. In fact, they fall asleep during the treatment. It also causes a temporary lifting of the skin. Consequently, it is very common for my patients to come in the afternoon before a black-tie event or photo shot. They will look absolutely fantastic. But the results are not long term. Results last at least 10 to 12 hours, though.

Dr. Adrian – The TriActive is unique in that it combines a suction device with a laser. In my practice, this combination can be useful in treating and reducing cellulite. The TriActive is the only device on the market that combines a cooling head, laser diodes and suction.

The TriActive can also be successfully combined with other modalities, such as Botox, facial fillers and mesotherapy.

How do you price treatments?

Dr. Adrian – We price treatment by series or people can purchase individual sessions. But we think patients should be rewarded for their commitment to the program. We usually schedule 16 sessions over eight weeks. We charge \$2,000 for a series of 16 sessions, compared to \$150 for an individual session. We also have a massage therapist who performs the treatment. This therapist understands lymphatic drainage, pressure points, trigger points and so forth. This is an added advantage versus hiring and training someone.

Dr. Gold – We're always cognizant not to set patient expectations too high. I don't go into the room and tell the patient that her cellulite will be gone tomorrow. I tell her that after the 15th treatment I expect there to be a significant improvement, and then evaluate at that point. I also think it is smart to offer a package, such as 15 sessions for a price of 13 sessions. We're much happier when patients pay in advance.



Michael H. Gold, M.D.

“We're always cognizant not to set patient expectations too high. I don't go into the room and tell the patient that her cellulite will be gone tomorrow.”

We've treated about 70 patients with the TriActive. Not one of them said they would not do it again. But there is a cost involved. Depending on where you live, sessions will run between \$100 and \$200. And you need about 15 treatments, plus some maintenance. As practitioners, we need to be aware that as long as these procedures are expensive, the number of people willing to undergo treatment is limited.

Ms. Sappenfield – We sell treatments in packages of 16 sessions. During the first two weeks, we recommend that customers schedule three treatments per week. Subsequent sessions are twice a week. We charge \$1,600 for a 16 session package. Customers then return to the spa once or twice a month for maintenance, for which they continue to be charged only \$100 per session, compared to \$150 for an á la carte session. Besides a financial incentive, a package is needed to achieve good results. Treatment is also enjoyable.

Dr. Katz – You know what they say about cellulite. A full 80% of women have cellulite, and the other 20% think they do. Obviously, cellulite is a significant problem in the female population. At our center, we're doing about seven or eight sessions a day with the TriActive. We charge roughly \$100 a treatment, so the return on investment occurs very quickly. Being a Class I device, the TriActive does not have to be administered by a physician. We actually use a massage therapist because that profession is more adept at doing body treatments.

“Obviously, cellulite is a significant problem in the female population. At our center, we're doing about seven or eight sessions a day with the TriActive.”

Dr. Goldman – In principal, I am opposed to offering packages because some patients only require one or two treatments. But with the TriActive, every patient needs at least eight sessions to notice a significant improvement. So I think it is perfectly ethical to sell a package of eight sessions, which I do. In fact, the TriActive is the only therapy for which I sell packages.

Mr. Zipperlen – We recommend a total of 18 sessions, three a week. We charge \$2,500 for the package. After completing the series, we recommend one session every two months. The response has been very good.

Ms. Clements – We charge about the same amount as for microdermabrasion: \$150 for the first session and \$125 each for a series. Most of our guests sign up for a series after seeing the effect of one session. We recommend a total of 12 to 16 sessions. Clients have the option of purchasing a series of six treatments to see if they really like it. If they decide to add on, we extend the package price.



Before Tx

After TriActive Tx

Photos courtesy of Bruce Katz, M.D.

What about ease of use?

Dr. Adrian – The learning curve of the TriActive is relatively easy, but it is different from other machines. You are treating all body areas, not just areas of localized fat or cellulite. It is a total body treatment. So staff needs to be instructed in its proper use. I won't say safe and proper use, because it's pretty hard to hurt someone with the TriActive.

Ms. Clements – Cynosure sent some of its employees onsite to conduct a training and certification session for our staff. The TriActive is very easy to learn because it comes with a simple training manual. It is truly a wonderful tool. With only one treatment session, there is a noticeable difference.

Dr. Gold – We use the TriActive in our medical spa. Treatment is performed by our massage therapist under my supervision. Even though it is a low level laser, it is still laser light, so we want to ensure that treatment is performed properly. That said, the TriActive is technology that aestheticians and ancillary personnel can surely learn and use.

How do you compare the TriActive to endermologie?

Dr. Katz – Endermologie was popular in our practice for a little while. But we realized that improvement was only temporary, and it was not significant improvement. Patients who have no recourse for treating cellulite are

extremely pleased that the TriActive is now available. However, setting client expectations is always important. We tell our patients beforehand how the TriActive works and that there really is no discomfort. We also stress that one or two sessions will not produce the desired results. You have to commit to a full course, usually 14 to 16 sessions.

Ms. Sappenfield – The TriActive is one of our newest technologies. We embraced it after offering endermologie and body wraps, which I believe the consumer was really feeling passé about. We'd rather use an FDA cleared modality for the treatment of cellulite. The TriActive is very popular at our centers. Massages for relaxation have always been in demand. But we found that our customer wanted better results.

“We have an endermologie machine that we are not using much these days because of the TriActive. We feel the TriActive offers longer lasting results.”

Dr. Goldman – Although an endermologie machine is effective, there is some discomfort associated with the procedure. In contrast, the TriActive is not painful. Moreover, the therapy will likely cause your patients to fall asleep during treatment. It is extremely relaxing. My staff also loves doing the procedure. Endermologie is very vigorous and requires the staff to exert a lot of sweat and muscle toning. But the TriActive requires very little muscular activity to achieve a good result.



Dr. Frew – We have an endermologie machine that we are not using much these days because of the TriActive. We feel the TriActive offers longer lasting results. Endermologie requires more sessions and is more painful. There is also a greater emphasis on mechanical suction, so bruising is more likely. With the TriActive, you really don't get bruising. And a lot of patients find treatment very refreshing and invigorating. It's like a relaxing massage. The patient feels intermittent suction. In fact, patients look forward to treatment. However, we do use a heated table because the treatment handpiece has a cool plate in it. The heated table makes it more comfortable for patients.

Dr. Gold – It appears that the TriActive represents the second generation of cellulite treatment. Endermologie is the original device. However, endermologie is just massaging. The TriActive combines light and massage. I think this is better than endermologie.

How do you market the TriActive?

Ms. Sappenfield – To date, all of our marketing has been in-house with our existing client base. Our aestheticians are cross trained at every level of laser expertise, so our hair removal customers definitely became our TriActive customers, as did our skincare customers.

“For us, the TriActive is a great alternative treatment for people who think they need something else.”

Dr. Katz – We often have patients come in who think they need liposuction. But it turns out that many of these patients have cellulite. Liposuction is not going to improve cellulite. For us, the TriActive is a great alternative treatment for people who think they need something else. Treatment takes about 30 to 40 minutes and women can go right back to work.

Mr. Zipperlen – The TriActive has been very easy for us to market as a device. Because 85% of all women have cellulite, you are marketing to a large target audience already. It's about letting them know we offer this new technology for cellulite. The TriActive has become an intricate part of our regular maintenance program, along with our clinical facials, massage and body wraps.



Before Tx

Eight minutes after TriActive Tx

“It would be very easy for a company to purchase a TriActive and recoup its costs within the first year.”

Ms. Clements – We have an extremely affluent clientele at our spa. We’ve advertised the procedure in our member newsletter and word-of-mouth. We are also listed on Cynosure’s website (www.cynosure.com). In addition, the TriActive has had a lot of national exposure in the media, including *Glamour Magazine* and *Newsweek*. We have guests calling us from out of town inquiring about treatment.

What about return on investment with the TriActive?

Our existing clientele has made the TriActive routine treatment. One of the most frequent comments we receive from clients about the TriActive is inch loss on the inner thighs. Patients also notice that their pants are fitting a little looser. They notice firming and tightening of the cellulite in the areas that we treat.

“Our existing clientele has made the TriActive routine treatment. One of the most frequent comments we receive from clients about the TriActive is inch loss on the inner thighs.”

Dr. Adrian – We only internally market, through patient mailers, newsletters and brochures in the waiting room. We have not done any print advertising because of the high expense. Happy patients tell other patients. I think people can get some improvement in areas of cellulite. But I don’t believe the TriActive is a fat busting or fat melting machine. I don’t think we’re in this to have people lose weight. But some of our patients have lost centimeters off certain body parts – abdomen, thighs, etc. In addition, people can truly feel better and healthier. Their circulation also feels better. Overall, patients like the experience. But I am not going to say that the TriActive is a substitution for liposuction or aggressive mesotherapy. We promote it as a spa/wellness cellulite reduction program.

Mr. Zipperlen – It would be very easy for a company to purchase a TriActive and recoup its costs within the first year. However, when I first looked at the TriActive system, the machine appeared to be a large investment for our company. But now having used the device for six months, I would purchase a second machine if the need was there.



Dr. Adrian – The investment is relatively small, and the return, at least initially, seems to be fairly large. The TriActive appears to be positioned in an environment of doctors offices and medical spas, whereby the doctor can provide services at a reasonable fee, thus achieving a fairly rapid return on investment. This is important because you never know what is coming down the pike next.

Any closing comments on the TriActive?

Mr. Zipperlen – We like that the TriActive smoothes and tightens cellulite. It provides a healthier appearance to the body and face, while enhancing pre- and post-liposuction procedures. It also refreshes facial tissue, giving our clients a radiant glow. Overall, TriActive Laser-Dermology is innovative technology. I would advise anyone who is looking for new and innovative treatments for their day spa to try the TriActive. I am very happy with it. Others should achieve the same results.

Dr. Gold – Dr. Goldman and I just finished a paper comparing various cellulite treatments, including creams and lotions and a green tea/caffeine-based product. There is no question that using this product with a garment dressing on the leg definitely improves cellulite compared to placebo. So the question becomes, “how do we maximize all these modalities over time?” We need to find the right office treatments that are not earth shatteringly expensive, yet profitable enough that a doctor will perform them. We also need to find the right take-home products to maintain results. I predict that cellulite will become a major player in the light-based market. The TriActive is a nice entry into this market. ■

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