

Successfully Managing the Treatment Expectations of Patients With Acne and Rosacea

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Successfully managing the treatment expectations of patients with acne and rosacea requires a full therapeutic armamentarium and an educated and trained office staff. Today's patients are educated consumers who are well versed in the treatment options for their skin disorders thanks to the information available on the Internet. With the information they garner from their research, patients expect their healthcare providers to have all the latest tools and provide all the latest treatment options.

Offering a mix of effective treatment options for acne and rosacea increases patient satisfaction as well as their loyalty to your practice. In addition to prescription medications, patients will utilize the cosmeceuticals and ancillary treatments that your practice offers for their acne and rosacea. They have built a relationship with your practice and will enjoy the fact they can obtain the products and services they need to control their acne and rosacea. Once a diagnosis of acne or rosacea is made, many treatment options can be made available to patients to help them manage their condition (Table).

The key to managing patient expectations is to have well-trained, knowledgeable, and service-oriented office staff. They must deliver results and meet or exceed the patients' expectations. Because acne and rosacea are chronic conditions, patients will experience disappointment and frustration at various intervals in their treatments. Therefore, the entire office staff is important in helping patients with acne and rosacea manage these conditions.

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Dr. Torok is owner, MDs Connect, LLC. Ms. Funk reports no conflict of interest in relation to this article.

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Physician extenders are the perfect personnel to assist your patients with acne and rosacea. They can spend more time following up with patients and review the aggravating factors, concomitant medications, complications, and questions related to their skin disorders. They also can monitor the progress of treatment, and when necessary, institute more aggressive therapy, such as isotretinoin.

Cosmeceuticals are an important and often necessary skin care product, especially for women who need to camouflage their skin before and during skin clearing.

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With cosmeceutical products, it is necessary to appoint an office staff member to serve as a product coordinator. The office staff member designated as product coordinator will manage the cosmeceutical inventory, as well as educate patients on cosmeceutical products and how to use them. They will review the proper sequence of applications of the prescribed topical products and the prescribed cosmeceuticals. The more informed the patient becomes, the higher the rate of compliance for both prescription and cosmeceutical skin care products. Again, these well-trained personnel can spend time with the patient that the physician does not have in his/her practice. It is a win-win situation for both patients and physicians.

Laser therapy has been very effective for managing acne. There are, however, several drawbacks to using laser therapy for the treatment of acne. Depending

TABLE

Treatment Options for Patients With Acne and Rosacea

Oral and topical prescription medications

Cosmeceuticals

Laser therapy

Chemical peels

Photodynamic therapy

LED therapy

Abbreviation: LED, light-emitting diode.

on which state you practice in, physicians may be the only personnel who can perform laser procedures. If you are in a state where you can delegate these procedures, then it becomes imperative that you have very well-trained office personnel with documentation to prove they were properly trained. These personnel then

become invaluable to the practice, because they can give personalized care to patients with acne and rosacea. They can manage patients' expectations, questions, and concerns more effectively when they are experienced laser users.

Chemical peels, photodynamic therapy, and light-emitting diode (LED) treatments are all effective and will often clear the skin of patients with acne and rosacea faster and keep them in remission for an extended time. These treatments are very effective, especially for pregnant patients who are limited in what they can use. Having trained office personnel to handle patients who are receiving these treatments and spend extra time with them to give personalized care will keep your patients loyal to your practice.

Incorporating these treatment options into your practice requires properly trained personnel and the proper space to accommodate these extra procedures and products. The monetary outlay for lasers, LED light sources, cosmeceutical products, and the extra space needed to provide these services and products to patients must be considered and evaluated. The benefits are well worth the investment. For information and help in this arena there are many consulting firms that can help you. Additional practical advice on this topic also can be found on mdsconnect.net. ■