

Laser Lipolysis Beats Liposuction in Two Studies

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KISSIMMEE, FLA. — Laser lipolysis using a 1,064-nm Nd:YAG laser has been shown to be effective—and is safer than traditional liposuction—according to the results of two studies.

Few complications have occurred with SmartLipo laser lipolysis (Cynosure Inc.), a fat-melting and skin-tightening device that was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2006 for the treatment of localized fat deposits, Dr. Luigi Mazzi reported at the annual meeting of the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery.

Dr. Mazzi of Verona, Italy, reported his 4-year experience using the laser on 386 patients aged 18-55.

The patients—mostly women (82%)—underwent an average of three treatments in a variety of areas, including the arms, flanks, abdomen, inner and outer thighs, and inner knees.

Only two serious complications occurred, both superficial burns. Swelling and ecchymosis occurred often; they are considered normal after treatment, however, and regress within 8-10 days.

Dr. Mazzi said that in addition to localized fat, larger areas of adiposity can be treated using SmartLipo, but suction of the emulsified fat tissue in these cases is imperative, and the safety outcomes when suction is used are similar to those seen with traditional liposuction.

Dr. Mazzi said that he had no financial interest related to the SmartLipo technology.

SmartLipo is indeed exceedingly safe, agreed Dr. Bruce E. Katz, who reported on his experience using the technology in patients aged 17-77 years who underwent SmartLipo laser lipolysis over an 18-month period.

The review showed that 3 of the 537 patients experienced minor skin burns, all of which healed with no permanent sequelae, for a complication rate of less than 1%, said Dr. Katz of Juva Skin & Laser Center, New York. The complication rate in this review of cases was much lower than that reported in the literature for traditional liposuction.

Only 3% of patients underwent touch-up procedures, compared with about 10%-12% of those undergoing traditional liposuction, noted Dr. Katz. “Most importantly, there were no major complications.”

Most patients underwent treatment of the abdomen, hips, and/or thighs, said Dr. Katz, who receives consulting fees from El.En Engineering, a major Cynosure shareholder.

The SmartLipo device uses a small, 1-mm cannula, which causes less trauma than is associated with traditional liposuction. A 300-mcm optic fiber is inserted into the cannula and energy is then delivered using a 150-microsecond pulse duration.

Other advantages of SmartLipo include the fat emulsion and skin tightening that occur with the procedure, which is indicated for small areas of local adiposities, and in areas where liposuction

would be indicated, but where skin laxity might be worsened by the fat removal.

A number of studies have demonstrated efficacy, ease of use, and other benefits with the minimally invasive SmartLipo procedure, including reduced trauma to tissues, less blood loss, and greater postoperative comfort, compared with traditional liposuction, said Dr. Katz. ■



A patient is shown before laser lipolysis therapy (left) and 8 months after undergoing two separate treatments with the SmartLipo device (right).
PHOTOS COURTESY DR. LUIGI MAZZI

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