

Facial Rejuvenation: Good Medicine?

Darren Starwynn, OMD, LAc

During my years of teaching, I have heard various attitudes expressed about so-called "facial rejuvenation" by my acupuncturist students. The significant profit potential of offering this service seems to be a major motivation for most to want to learn it, yet many also disparage this practice as a cosmetic and rather superficial form of therapy. I have often heard acupuncturists express that they would rather stick with the "real" healing arts of traditional acupuncture or other energetic medicine.

I, too, had some of this same bias, until I started hearing many patients' remarkable accounts of spontaneous healing during or directly after receiving microcurrent and color light facial rejuvenation sessions.¹ These healing "side-effects" have been for a myriad of physical and emotional imbalances.

Before mentioning these additional benefits, here are the regular intended effects of facial rejuvenation:

- wrinkle reduction
- adjustment of facial muscle tone to more youthful firmness to reduce or eliminate sagging areas
- normalization of skin coloration to more healthy hues
- reduction or elimination of acne, blemishes and age spots
- increase in collagen and elastin production to fill out and contour the face
- facilitating a healthy, vibrant glow to the face

At least 85 percent to 90 percent of clients are satisfied with these results from a series of ELR sessions.² What is remarkable is all of the additional benefits that have been reported. Here is a partial list of healing "side-effects" my students and associates practicing ELR have told me about over the last year:

1. relief of menstrual cramps
2. menopausal discomfort alleviated
3. weight loss (averaging 5-15 pounds over a series of 3-10 facial sessions)
4. relief of back and neck pain
5. depression or emotional malaise lifted, increase in mental clarity, increased feelings of inner calm and emotional centeredness
6. relief of digestive discomfort and constipation
7. writer's block to composing music removed, so that a musician patient moved out of a period of disconnection from her music
8. fatigue lifted, energy levels increased
9. insomnia relieved
10. hormonally-based acne permanently cleared up

One esthetician I interviewed stated: "I am 47 and perimenopausal. I was rubbing progesterone cream on my body, because I was waking up at night with hot flashes with heavy sweating and red

face and irregular periods. I started giving myself just one ELR session a week (only one because I am so busy with clients). After 3-4 sessions, I have discontinued using the progesterone cream and I have been completely symptom free now for months."

How can these effects be explained? In most cases, the patients/clients were only treated on their face and neck, with little or no adjunctive healing arts or body acupuncture points stimulated.

We all learned in our first year of acupuncture training that meridian pathways connect the face with the viscera. The Stomach, Small Intestine, Large Intestine, Triple Warmer, Gall Bladder, and Urinary Bladder channels have points directly on the face. Further, the Ren (conception) and Du (governing) channels terminate on the face, and each of these extraordinary vessels link with all Yin and Yang functions of the body, respectively. In modern terminology, I understand the Du channel to connect all of the organs and glands to the brain and central nervous system via afferent and efferent receptors of the autonomic ganglia. Therefore, we can say confidently say that all organs are linked to the face directly or indirectly through the meridian system.

Many modern writers and researchers have written about the body's information communication systems. According to accepted medical thinking, there are two primary communication pathways in the body: the nervous system (electrical communication) and the endocrine system (chemical communication). The nervous system's pathways connect peripheral sensory receptors with the brain or lower reflex centers, which then respond by sending signals back to peripheral effectors such as skin and muscle. The chemical pathways include endocrine glands and other tissues that secrete hormones directly into the bloodstream, causing rapid effects at precisely targeted sites all over the body.

Deepak Chopra and other writers have also described a third informational pathway that is even more subtle and instantaneous. This is based on minute substances called neuropeptides that are apparently produced by many tissues all over the body, including the brain, heart, immune system, digestive system, and blood cells. These peptides appear to flash into existence, instantaneously trigger a target tissue, and then disappear.³ Peptides are strongly affected by mood and emotion. It has been shown that negative thoughts can increase cortisol levels, which are associated with increased stress. They also decrease immune system output, which makes people more subject to disease. On the other hand, positive thoughts can increase production of "happy" biochemicals such as dopamine, endorphins and sex hormones.⁴ Peptides appear to be a major link between thought, emotion, organs, and the immune system - the mind-body link that acupuncture has been working with since ancient times.

Other researchers have proven that the meridian system acts like a fiber-optic system, and that light travels through the meridian pathways. One team of researchers at the Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine in Novosibirsk, Russia applied various wavelengths of light to regions of the body's surface, and observed that light emanated from the body at other, distal areas. Upon further experimentation, they saw that this phenomenon mainly happened along the traditionally charted pathways of the acupuncture meridian system.⁵

Can this subtle, but immensely powerful, neuropeptide system explain the whole-body healing effects of ELR facial rejuvenation listed above? Researchers have certainly seen a significant increase in these healing effects since the color light component to the microcurrent facial rejuvenation protocol was added in 2001. Efficacy seems to be boosted by selecting colors (wavelengths) of light specifically matched to each individual client. This suggests a resonance effect with specific endocrine glands, which are closely associated with the *chakra* system described by ayurvedic medicine. Each *chakra* has traditionally been associated with a specific

endocrine gland and a specific color of light.

It is my view that light is the basis of all communication, information and the innate intelligence of the body. Microcurrent appears to act as a carrier for externally applied light, helping it penetrate into the body more deeply and more easily. Our faces constantly mirror our emotions and thoughts, and Oriental facial diagnosis has long been known to be able to diagnose the condition of the internal organs by reading the face. The face is therefore a two-way holographic gateway to the entire body, mind and spirit. This means that we can diagnose by observing the face, and also that the entire body can be effectively treated through the face. I am excited about continuing this line of research, and I am grateful for the many enthusiastic practitioners who continue to share their clinical experiences with me.

It continues to be a great pleasure to hear about these positive "side-effects" to ELR treatments. I now facilitate a free online forum in which members can post their interesting microcurrent and color light cases and ask for feedback and assistance, so we can learn from each other's experiences. Readers interested in participating can go to www.east-westseminars.com and click the "color light" Yahoo group icon to join.

For more information about microcurrent and color light facial rejuvenation, please read my article, "Vibrational Beauty Therapy - Facial Rejuvenation With Light and Microcurrent," available in the *Acupuncture Today* columnist archives.⁶

References

1. This system is currently called energy light rejuvenation (ELR), and has been developed by the author and a team of health care and aesthetic practitioners throughout the U.S. between 1998 and the present.
2. The 10-15% of clients who are not fully satisfied are generally those with significant unhealthy or negative lifestyle factors such as smoking, lack of exercise, and high-stress, negative emotional patterns. Yet many clients with these burdens enjoy and continue to return for ongoing rejuvenation sessions.
3. See Dr. Chopra's book, *Quantum Healing*, for a thorough explanation of this point.
4. Smith R. Microcurrent therapies: emerging theories of physiological information processing. *Neuro Rehabilitation* 2002;17:3-7.
5. Pankratov S. *Meridians Conduct Light*. Germany: Raum and Zeit, 1991.
6. "*Vibrational Beauty Therapy - Facial Rejuvenation With Light and Microcurrent*," *Acupuncture Today*, October 2004.

NOVEMBER 2005