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Decreasing insurance reimbursements and rising consumer interest are driving an increasing number of family physicians towards aesthetics. According to Sachit Shah, M.D., a laser surgeon in British Columbia, Canada, primary care is an appropriate venue for this market. "Aesthetics is a natural transition for family physicians. We are skilled at treating the whole patient and we have strong interpersonal skills, which are very important in the aesthetic field. It's all about developing a close relationship just as in a regular clinical practice."

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Soprano^{XL} Laser Overcomes Disadvantages of Hair Removal Tx

By Bob Kronemyer, Associate Editor

Patients are now experiencing less discomfort and shorter treatment sessions for hair removal, thanks to the Soprano^{XL}, a novel 810 nm diode laser from Alma Lasers, Inc. (Buffalo Grove, Ill.). The Soprano's new mode of treatment: Super Hair Removal (SHR) for IN-Motion™ hair removal, "allows you to treat extensive areas – such as the back, legs and chest – with literally no pain," commented Eduardo Weiss, M.D., a clinical associate professor of dermatology and cutaneous surgery at the Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami in Miami, Fla. "Treatment is also faster in this mode."



Eduardo Weiss, M.D.
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Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery
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"With the Soprano laser, patients are able to tolerate a full series. Nothing is needed for pain management."

In addition, the Soprano can be used in the conventional diode laser mode. "You are able to treat all skin types – from white skin to dark skin," Dr. Weiss said. Most patients are treated once a month for a total of three to five sessions. "Patients should achieve at least 80% hair reduction, with a touch-up session once every four to six months," Dr. Weiss noted.

With other light-based hair removal systems, male patients may stop chest or back treatments after the first two shots because of the extreme pain. "But with the Soprano laser, patients are able to tolerate a full series. Nothing is needed for pain management. Patients are very happy with the comfort level and they keep returning," said Dr. Weiss, owner of Hollywood Dermatology and Cosmetic Specialists in Aventura, Fla. In addition, "treatment time is reduced by about 30%. Whereas before a full male back might have taken at least 30 minutes with another system, now it takes only about 20 minutes."

Dr. Weiss noted that the treatment tip of the Soprano^{XL} laser is slightly larger than the tip of the competing 810 nm diode laser thus enabling faster treatment. The Soprano also comes with internal cooling and optional integrated air cooling for even more comfortable treatments.

As of the beginning of April, Martin Braun, M.D., medical director at the Vancouver Laser and Skin Care Centre, Inc. in British Columbia, Canada, was at the midway point of a study comparing the Soprano^{XL} (in the SHR mode) with a competitive laser. A total of 35 women are being treated on one leg with the Soprano and the other leg with the competition. Patients are undergoing five sessions, spaced once every four to six weeks.



Martin Braun, M.D.
Medical Director of Cosmetic
Rejuvenation at The Vancouver Laser
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Settings for the Soprano are 10 Hz at 5 J/cm² to 10 J/cm² only, with six to eight passes, compared to conventional hair removal with the competition. "With the competitive device, settings are as high as the patient can tolerate," Dr. Braun said. "Each pulse is anywhere from 20 J/cm² to 50 J/cm²." The total energy delivered is actually very similar, but the Soprano delivers a higher average power for less discomfort.

After completing three sessions of the study, efficacy appears to be similar for both the Soprano and the competition. But when patients filled out a visual analog pain scale, comparing one leg to the other, the pain was at least 50% less with the Soprano. In the study, no pain management is being used for either laser.