

Silk'n Offers an Opportunity for Physicians to Lead Home-Use Trend

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Due to the growing trend among both physicians and patients embracing home-use aesthetic devices, the Silk'n system for hair reduction from Home Skinovations Ltd. (Yokneam, Israel) provides a unique business opportunity for medical practices. Cleared by the FDA for physician-directed sales only, Silk'n affords physicians an easy entry-level opportunity for patients who desire hair removal. Silk'n can also complement current in-office hair removal laser treatments by improving a physician's ability to maintain and manage the best long-term results for patients.

"The home-use device market is intriguing," commented Michael Gold, M.D., owner of Gold Skin Care Center in Nashville, Tenn. "I think there is a huge untapped potential out there. And as far as we can tell, devices that are currently on the market are safe, even though they haven't been studied in thousands of people. The risk of having a problem with one of these devices seems pretty low."

Dr. Gold's office requires patients to undergo a consultation with the staff, watch a video and sign a statement of understanding that the Silk'n is a take-home device, not to be shared with other people. Patients that live several hours away from the office are an important group for the Silk'n. "We try to follow-up as best we can with these patients," Dr. Gold said. "You can also build Silk'n into your practice, for example, by explaining the patient's package and what you expect them to do at home. Sometimes it's nice to involve patients in their treatment."

Popular areas of the body to treat with the Silk'n are the underarms,

bikini area and legs. "We recommend treatment once every two weeks for the first three sessions, followed by once a month for the next three sessions, then for maintenance as needed," advised Brian Zelickson, M.D., an associate professor of dermatology at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Dr. Zelickson spoke about the market trend in home-use devices at the 2008 Controversies and Conversations in Laser and Cosmetic Surgery conference in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada. "The future looks good for these devices because I think there is a place for them and a demand for it," he said. "We, as physicians, need to put the patient's best interest ahead of our own financial concerns. If there are treatments that patients can perform at-home that are both efficacious and cost-effective, then I believe it is a good option and something physicians should embrace."

However, with any home-use aesthetic device, "it is important to set the patient's expectations correctly and make sure they use it safely," Dr. Zelickson stated. Another observation he shared at the controversies meeting is that this is not the first time that devices have gravitated from the professional market to home-use. For instance, "people used to go to the barbershop to be shaved, but now we typically purchase razors to do this at home." Although potentially dangerous, "it works well and is very efficient for us."

Dr. Zelickson expects that this same kind of paradigm will occur with laser hair removal devices. "Some patients would rather take the time to do these procedures at home."