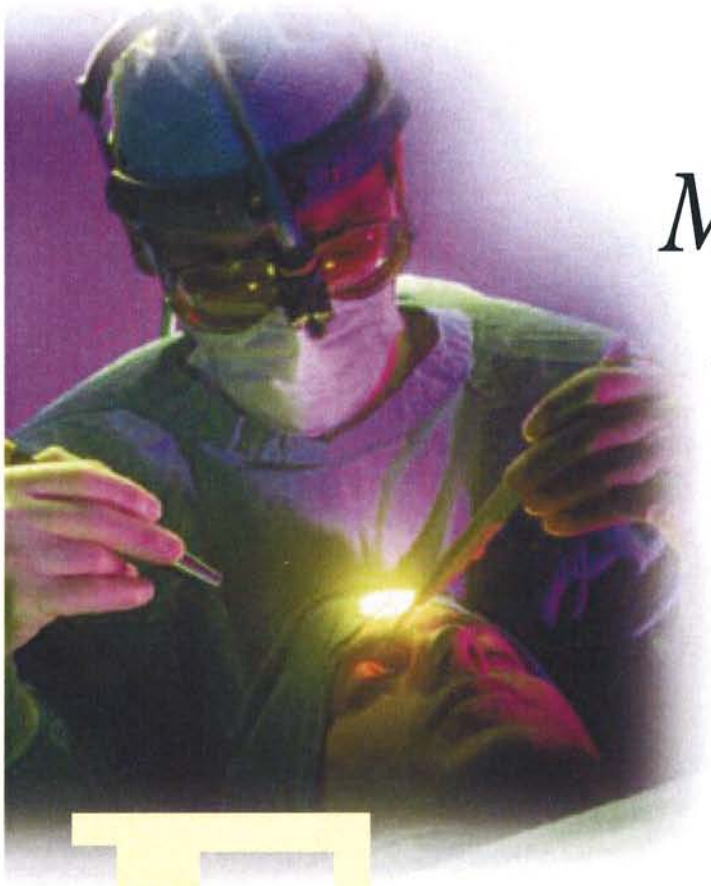

Micro-Ablative Fractional Resurfacing

AN OVERVIEW OF FRACTIONAL CO_2

By Mai Pham, Trends Editor

For several years now, the laser industry has been repackaging old technologies with more power, bigger spot sizes, better software, and better treatment protocols. But there hasn't been anything really new or exciting until now.

I hear it in the voices of the physician-researchers I interviewed for this article. One of them specifically told me that he didn't want to appear overly exuberant or enthusiastic, even though his tone indicated otherwise. I can understand his enthusiasm, having received a preview of this new technology at last year's Laser and Aesthetic Skin Therapy meeting in Boston.

I remember the excitement that spread through the room when Dr. Dieter Manstein showed a prototype fractional CO_2 device video, where one could see immediate skin tightening and contraction upon contact with the fractionated laser beam. The video was captured in real time, so this was not a lighting trick, a photoshop touch-up, or strategic placement of the camera angle that so often accompanies new technology presentations. This was the real deal.

Roughly one year later, this exciting new technology is available to consumers. Micro-ablative fractional resurfacing purports to achieve better results in one session than non-ablative technologies, with significantly less downtime than full face laser resurfacing. This family of devices includes fractional CO_2 as well as fractional 2940nm Er:YAG devices; but for the purposes of this article, we will limit our discussion to the three main manufacturers offering fractional CO_2 technology: the Fraxel re:pair™ (Reliant Technologies), the Ultrapulse® Encore™ and DeepFX™

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