

Laser Reduction

by Wm. J. Schlotz, D.D.S.



Lasik laser eye corrective surgery, penned about of-late (and more than once) in this space, can make eyewear obsolete in less than 30 mins.

That astonishes enough. However, consider that its fees have dropped, give or take, some 70%, this high-tech medical procedure is an amazing and giant leap forward for the millions of vision-challenged. With general healthcare costs spiraling out of control, it's also a paradoxical, mind-opening account that, with game-changing potential, challenges the absurd med-inflation destiny we seem so uncomfortably mired within (see last article archived: TheConservativeDentist.com).

More obscure (damn it) to our general populace is an exciting, new laser gum-disease corrective technique called LANAP - Laser-Assisted New-Attachment Procedure (PerioLase laser, Millennium Dental Technologies- MDT). This is the first FDA-approved laser treatment for gum disease and is an effective alternative to traditional periodontal surgery, sans the scalpel & sutures.

LANAP in 2009 has the backing of one of the world's foremost (if not the most) recognizable, respected and reputable authorities in this field, Dr. Raymond Yukna, University of Colorado. Dr. Yukna is a big believer in, and ongoing clinical researcher of, the LANAP procedure. However, he didn't start out that way.

Back near the turn of the century (that sounds so long ago), Dr. Yukna agreed to conduct a gold-standard double-blind scientific clinical research study on the effectiveness of LANAP. He initially was pessimistic and anticipated disproving the therapeutic claims of its pioneers and experimenting laser clinicians, Drs. Robert Gregg & Del McCarthy.

After the study you could say Dr. Yukna had a change of heart, or mind. The trial actually showed *new attachment* of the tooth-supporting apparatus (known as PDL) that presupposes bone regeneration (read: re-growing lost bone). Since bone loss is the most devastating part of gum disease, some considered this of holy-grail type significance. Interestingly, in this trial, Dr. Yukna utilized the PerioLase laser and LANAP technique with a mere 3.5 hrs of training. Yet, even with experience lacking, he still achieved the new growth that so many seek in vain.

With the best clinical laser studies already in their corner, Millennium Dental is making an even higher stakes wager with more multiple-site blinded trials that most other laser manufacturers sidestep. When asked why, one rep, seeming a tad uncertain, even told me that the trials were "too expensive". Millennium, with its LANAP procedure, sees the glass as half full, with plenty to shout about upon completion.

True informed consent with many options must be given to all affected and one is a referral to a Periodontist. They have spent many years training and gaining experience in gum surgery techniques, one of which is called bone grafting. Although it is more invasive than LANAP, it also may yield new bone around teeth. I am a general dentist (not a specialist trained in an ADA-approved specialty), experienced and trained in LANAP therapy with very positive results over 2+ years of treatment. Our patients are assured of at least a 30% reduction in their gum pocket depths - or we will re-treat. Wrapping this with a cost-sensitive, Smile-inducing type bow, LANAP fees (due to its high-tech efficiency ala Lasik) are significantly less than traditional surgery.

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