

Choosing your skin expert

Guidelines to Evaluate Experience, Credentials, and Treatments

In today's era of glitz, hype and promotions, we are bombarded by numerous claims and promises. Now, with the creation of many new "businesses" of beauty, cosmetics, and cosmetic laser surgery, it is extremely difficult for the public to differentiate and make rational, educated choices regarding their skin care provider. Please allow me to share with you some important guidelines regarding this matter, gleaned from over 20 years of experience in the field of Dermatology and Cosmetic Skin Surgery. I hope they help.

A CLAIM IS NOT A FACT

The first important guideline is that our free market system

allows almost any claim or promise to be made. Anyone can call themselves an "expert", "most experienced", "the finest", "the best", "the leader". Obviously, these are subjective terms that have no meaning without verification. It is obligatory to seek objective facts to substantiate any of these grandiose claims.

CREDENTIALS AND TRAINING

Academic degrees and specialty training are a first step to objectively evaluate competence and knowledge. Just as we teach our children to strive for excellence in education and

training, so we should seek that in our skin care providers. One cannot create degrees or specialty training from institutes of higher learning. Therefore, one should study in detail the quality of Credentials and Training of your provider. They have to be earned the old fashioned way: by diligent study and hard work.

When it comes to skin care and treatment it is an objective fact that no provider has more years of specific training than a Dermatologist. Dermatology is the specialty that deals with all cosmetic and noncosmetic, medical and surgical aspects of the diseased and healthy skin.

After completing medical school and a year of internship, a dermatologist receives a specialized education in the form of at least three years of residency in an accredited program that includes a curriculum in the therapeutic, reconstructive and cosmetic treatment of skin conditions. After completing their residency education, candidates take an exam given by the American Board of Dermatology, which is sponsored by the academic institutions in the field. Only doctors who pass this exam are Board-Certified Dermatologists.

One of the misleading claims made is that a Board Certified Physician is the equivalent of a Board Certified Dermatologist in training or skin expertise. As explained previously and as common sense dictates, this is false.

EXPERIENCE

Experience can be determined easily by objective criteria: Years of

practice, patients treated, and procedures performed. Seek the facts on these variables and one can easily judge what is credible.

Exaggerated claims, a fancier logo, or more expensive marketing budget have no bearing on quality medical care or eventual results. Once again, as common sense dictates, skill, knowledge, and results come only one way, by years of diligent learning, hard work, and experience in the field.

BEWARE OF UNPROVEN SUPERLATIVES

Words have specific meanings and should be taken at face value. In the field of Dermatology and Cosmetic Skin Care there are no miracles, magic, or 100% guarantees. This form of presentation usually is too good to be true. Imitations and similar sounding names are not the same. Beware if they are offered. For example, cosmetics are not pharmaceuticals and cannot achieve the same results. Aesthetic grade procedures are not medical grade procedures. Find out who actually will perform your treatments and in what location. Doctor supervised or certified does not mean doctor performed. If you pay doctor's fees, why shouldn't you expect a specialist doctor's service.

THE "FINEST" TREATMENT

THE "FINEST" TREATMENT IS WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU. Each patient is a unique individual with differing needs, conditions, goals, and expectations.

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The treatment decision with a trusted advisor should be based only on what realistically most benefits the patient's needs. Nothing else should matter. Sometimes the newest, most trendy, or most expensive treatment or laser may be inferior or not even necessary. The doctor should offer and have extensive documented experience, skill and training with all proven treatment modalities, picking and choosing with discretion and wisdom, in an appropriate fashion.

Your consultation is to learn. It should not be a sales promotion. Our patients reach out to us to provide these "credible consultations" and facts. That is what you should expect. You are entitled to nothing less.

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