

Radiofrequency in cosmetic dermatology: a review.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Fine lines and rhytides are clinically evident signs of photodamage. Traditionally, ablative and nonablative lasers have been used for nonsurgical facial rejuvenation, but their side effects and downtime have limited their use.

OBJECTIVE: Radiofrequency (RF) is novel nonablative technology originally used to target photodamage. It differs from lasers in that it uses an electric current rather than a light source. It is frequently used in dermatology to treat skin laxity, rhytides, acne vulgaris and scarring, and cellulite. The goal of this review is to summarize the various types of RF devices and their uses and to determine the evidence-based efficacy of these devices.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: This article reviews the current literature on RF, its uses and clinical effectiveness, and a practical guide for application of the assorted RF devices.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION: Results have been favorable for the different clinical uses of RF, but many studies are nonrandomized, noncomparative trials that use subjective means of evaluation. Overall, nonablative RF is a safe, tolerable, and effective tool for skin rejuvenation and cellulite treatment that produces modest results. RF should serve as an alternative but not as an equivalent substitute to surgery.

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