

April 2011: France forbids all the techniques of aesthetic medicine to fight cellulite and localized adiposities! Only surgery is safe!

Few days ago France forbade, on all national territory, the possibility to execute any technique to reduce cellulite and localized adiposities with medical treatments.

It is the French Decree n. 2011-382 dated April 11th, 2011.

The Decree states that some inadequate equipment is banned.

And every kind of solution is banned, in particular:

- adipocyte lysis with injections of hypo-osmolarity solutions
- adipocyte lysis with injections of lipolytic products (phosphatidylcholine or deoxicolato sodium)
- adipocyte lysis with injections of mesotherapy cocktails
- adipocyte lysis with carboxitherapy
- adipocyte lysis transcutaneous laser without suction

In the second article, the decree forbids the use of lipolytic techniques that used external physical agents, as focalized ultrasounds, lasers, infrared and radio frequency.

Why did they issue this decree?

Only France issued this decree for a possible presumed important danger for human health, because they discovered "many" infections, serious haematomas, inflammatory syndromes, and some other side effects that were not well specified in the Decree. I think that probably decisions were taken in respect of important news.

The decree was a bolt from the blue! Immediately all the European societies of Aesthetic Medicine, as well as Italian, have rallied to claim that the contrary is not true and that the techniques used are proven and have not major side effects.

I have to highlight that this way to arrange medical activities based on scientific nature and on independent scientific studies that confirm the extreme safety of these techniques, beside a right and repeatable therapeutic effect, has always been my priority: the medical evidence!

There are so many new and never heard technological companies that come and see me to suggest particular techniques without any bibliographic background.

Every day I receive e-mails, propaganda pamphlets from Chinese and East European companies, that are not well known. I have no idea what standards are followed in those countries and on which scientific studies they based their results on. That is why I am not able to suggest them to patients. But surely, since they have a very competitive price, many European colleagues might buy them.

As for all the possible side effects that are little valued or even totally neglected.

Lately I have purchased some modern equipment, in particular a vascular laser and a CO₂ fractionated laser, and I chose an Italian company that is well known in the medical field.

But I still have doubt about some new equipment, for example radiofrequency, ultrasounds, cavitation or sonication... equipment that leaves some doubt about their actual efficiency and safety.

It is different from techniques that have been used for many years, such as mesotherapy.

I have been personally used these mesotherapy techniques for many years (whoever knows me a little, knows that I have got my degree years ago and that I am very careful with new techniques) and even "off-label" phosphatidylcholine gave some good result.

But, beside results, I can surely say that in more than 20 years and many treated patients, mesotherapy never gave me any sort of problem. I had some allergies, but always in a range of safety. Nothing else was relevant.

I never had an infection, NEVER! It seems strange that there are some case of dangers for human health. Maybe, if other people have so many infections, the problem is the specialist.. or the places, but I doubt it is all about the medicine.

Even allergies never brought to dangerous situations in my experience.

I had few cases of allergies, but they were resolved with an antisthamine. But allergies are everywhere, in any medicine and injective techniques that do not depend on the doctor or the medicine itself.

But it is true that there is not a well done scientific study on the numbers that mesotherapy could do. If mesotherapists were able to publish some of their studies, we could really know what happened on millions of treated patients. But as usual, there are not so many scientific, independent and valid studies in aesthetic medicine done on a large number of people. Writing is hard work, and it is even harder to do it well!

For example, hyaluronic acid: it is impossible to find any scientific article with an independent revision of the casistic on a large number of patients! All the studies are suggested by pharmaceutical companies that are not independent!

This is a huge limit of aesthetic medicine and its specialists: until all the aesthetic doctors feel the need to share impressions and experiences with a scientific spirit, we will never be able to have a voice about it!

The case of phosphatidylcholine and deoxicolato sodium is different, even if the world experience is really huge.

In literature, we can find a lot of scientific studies where all the side effects count. We know that there are early side effects as inflammation, edemas, reddening that go away in few days.

We know that if phosphatidylcholine is injected too superficially, it can cause more than a problem. The injective technique (intralipotherapy is based on injections in the adipose tissue and under the skin, which are not done superficially) is important.

I have personally seen all the immediate side effects, but I never had a definitive one effects or infections.

But it is a personal experience, which was never published scientifically. I intend to collect my data and publish them as soon as possible, as I did before for a variety of techniques.

Then there are all the physical therapies, but in my opinion we do not know much about them and the scientific studies on large numbers are almost absent.

The ones suggested by companies, even if commendable, are less and less exhaustive compared to the independent ones, even if in some cases of particular independent authors, they maintain some sort of value.

What do I think?

I believe that France had killed a fly with a bazooka! At first everything was allowed, now everything is forbidden. There should be some difference, consolidated and safe techniques as in particular mesotherapy that should be above any doubt, and I personally believe they are.

Instead, all the new techniques have to be confirmed by independent scientific studies, done by independent doctors. The brand CE is not enough because it says nothing about the experience, both in terms of efficiency and safety.

Do not forget the medicines and technologies that can give problems for a period of time, and that every therapy has to be confirmed with the time.

I will always keep on using mesotherapy since it has been confirmed.

I personally never had a case of infection! I do not understand how it is possible that in one country there are lot of cases of infection and in some others not even one. This says a lot about the reasons of these side effects.

By the debts spells, of course, and certainly not to look better than others, but how many times do I go around the world and see things that are very dangerous? There is not sterility, cleaning and the techniques are very approximate. I firmly believe that surgery, in general, if done with not much of professionalism, remains even more dangerous than aesthetic medicine, and with potentially dramatic side effects.

Advice?

- In Italy there are the best specialists in the world, especially in aesthetic medicine. This is due to an innate sense of beauty that other specialists do not have in their DNA. Beside the fact that we do use all the best and more update technologies both for disinfection and materials.
- Ask to a qualified doctor, who is in our field, the essential element to trust. People who are well known and that can assure the professionalism that sometime lacks.
- Do not look for cheap treatments, because they hide a saving from the beginning that should never exist in medicine.