



## Compression Therapy is Making Waves

The medical spa community is realizing the advantages of compression therapy for a variety of conditions. **BY ALEXANDER ZURIARRAIN, M.D., FACS, double board-certified plastic surgeon, Zuri Plastic Surgery**

**C**ompression therapy has been around since antiquity and used, at least since the days of Hippocrates, for preventing blood clots, healing wounds, and treating blood-flow insufficiency and other vascular disorders. Now, the procedure seems to be recapturing the imagination—and attention—of physicians and patients alike and proving the next hot trend in wellness-spa services.

A recent Global Market Insights report estimates current compound annual growth rate of the compression therapy market at 5.5 percent, continuing through 2030. According to the report, the following factors are fueling demand for compression therapy:

- A rise in accidents and sports-related injuries. Compression therapy helps ease pain and minimize inflammation.
- More orthopedic procedures due to a growing geriatric population. Studies demonstrate pre- and post-surgical compression therapy can speed patient recovery and reduce risk of some post-operative complications.
- Anticipated increases in age-related venous and lymphatic disorders—like peripheral vascular disease, deep vein thrombosis, varicose veins, lower limb edema, and lymphedema—for which compression plays a beneficial prevention and/or treatment role.
- Advances in next-generation textiles and garments and compression-therapy devices.

For example, the Ballancer Pro lymphatic

drainage compression system, approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, features a device that compresses legs, arms, and the torso to enhance lymphatic circulation and decrease swelling and inflammation. The system is especially ideal before and after surgery because it prevents venous stasis, lowers patient risk of blood clots, minimizes inflammation, reduces post-surgical pain and soreness, speeds healing of wounds, and promotes quicker recovery.

The medical community is gradually realizing the advantages of compression therapy for a variety of conditions. The principle behind compression is simple: the therapy works by squeezing muscles and pushing blood back to the heart, moving fluid to prevent its accumulation in body tissues, alleviating pain—and the perception of pain—by diminishing stress on skeletal muscles, and assisting in muscle recovery, particularly in athletes.

More physicians are prescribing compression therapy to relieve joint and muscle pain or applying it immediately following injury to enhance blood circulation in the traumatized area and support muscle recovery. Similarly, medical experts are calling compression therapy the “cornerstone” of treatment of arm or leg swelling due to lymphedema, a common condition.

Use of compression also can be the right clinical option for patients requiring treatment of varicose veins and those experiencing

chronic pain, including the pain of arthritis and the swelling, fatigue, lightheadedness, and pain of venous insufficiency. Meanwhile, researchers write in *Surgical Technology International XXIII* that “management of chronic edema using compression is crucial to promote healing of venous leg ulcers.”

It is important to note that compression therapy also has aesthetic benefits. Medical wellness staff have been employing the therapy to enhance skin elasticity, improve skintone, and smooth cellulite ridges and bumps.

We still have much more to learn about the clinical potential of compression therapy, but what we do know is that patients are benefiting from it and increasingly seeking it. The ancient Egyptians certainly had the right idea. Compression means preservation. ●



**BIO:** Alexander Zuriarrain, M.D., FACS, is a double board-certified plastic surgeon. He is an assistant professor for the

department of surgery at Larkin Community Hospital, Lake Erie College of Medicine, and a faculty member at the FIU College of Medicine. Zuriarrain specializes in aesthetic procedures of the face and body including facelifts, eyelid surgery, rhinoplasty, breast augmentation and breast reduction, abdominoplasty, Brazilian butt lifts, and liposuction, among others. He is the founder of **Zuri Plastic Surgery** (Miami).