

Mesotherapy: An Argument for Unification, Standardization, and Board Certification

Robert P. Pitera, MD

In our quest to escape the stranglehold of HMOs, we physicians have searched for ways of augmenting our practices. Many have turned to mesotherapy. As our numbers have grown and now reach into the thousands, we must seek new methods of enhancing the field. We must solidify our base and promote unification, standardization, and board certification.

We are at a critical point where plastic surgeons, cosmetic surgeons, dermatologists, and most importantly, the public are taking notice of mesotherapy. We cannot afford to damage our hard-earned image by letting bad press go unanswered. We cannot have patients experience poor or negligible results. We must not let mesotherapy be dominated by the dissemination of rumor, innuendo, and misapprehensions. The American Journal of Mesotherapy and the American Board of Mesotherapy exist as venues that, with your participation, can help promote and advance the field.

By publishing physicians' findings and experiences, the American Journal of Mesotherapy (AJM) can help explain the science of mesotherapy and can foster a collegial venue for the free exchange of ideas. The AJM can act as an educational tool for reference purposes. This pooling and dissemination of knowledge will help diffuse issues that can be detrimental to our field. We can address issues such as press releases disparaging mesotherapy despite a lack of evidence that mesotherapy was at fault. The AJM can provide scientific information to respond to inappropriate and sloppy inferences. We should not in good con-

science allow false analogies and misinterpretations of facts go unchallenged. As a legitimate specialty, we require an effective means of dealing with this. A strong, unified force can provide clear answers to "junk science" analysis of mesotherapy. The Journal can act by critiquing the faulty reasoning of shoot-from-the-hip criticisms and opening them up for debate. The AJM can also help in exposing the bases of false and vicious rumors that reflect poorly on our field.

Some of you may have heard rumors, innuendo, or deliberate misstatements about the practice of mesotherapy. There is a great deal of misinformation circulating in our community. This reflects poorly on the practice and all practitioners. Practitioners should not publicly attack each other. This is unprofessional and inappropriate behavior. Holding healthy debate on issues of concern is more appropriate and gives the public greater confidence in our professionalism. Conflicts, such as first teaching practitioners the use of a particular device only later to condemn its use only confuse the public and bring the practice into disrepute.

Only through unification, standardization, and board certification can we ensure an appropriate level of competency in mesotherapy. AJM can act to promote such knowledge and can help bring practitioners together. We mesotherapists have not yet been able to standardize and unify the practice in this country. Knowledge and experience must be freely disseminated. Has anyone during your medical school train-

ing or residency program asked you not to share your experiences? We must learn from others and avoid mistakes by communicating with each other. The other day I received a phone call from a mesotherapy practitioner asking for my advice. The doctor had just received a phone call from the daughter of a patient who had been treated earlier in the day. The patient was “lying on the floor with uncontrolled vomiting and was unable to stand up.” When I asked, the doctor hesitated in disclosing which medications were used. This certainly is not a good attitude for medical practitioners. This secrecy is not good for the public. We are endangering the public’s safety with any lack of openness. Secrecy goes against the most fundamental principle of medicine, the sharing of knowledge. It smacks more of the practices of the medieval guilds. The American Board of Mesotherapy and the American Journal of Mesotherapy are dedicated to the open sharing of knowledge. We must end any code of silence, which is a threat to our field and keeps us divided.

The American Board of Mesotherapy and the AJM can help promote a positive public image by presenting the practice and legitimate practitioners to public view. This is a public service that we must undertake. The general public is not aware of any differences between doctors. In their view, any doctor is an expert if they were the first in their field, has appeared on TV, or is mentioned in an article. To the public, a favorable placement on a list in some magazine or newspaper constitutes a badge of proficiency. As professionals we know that this is not necessarily true. We are better placed to know who the competent practitioners are. Board certification is the standard of competency in the United States.

Board certification is the standard of excellence accepted by the public for all fields of medicine, so why should mesotherapy not use this standard? Society places a high value on board certification. Board certification in the eyes of the public is synonymous with quality and patient safety. A strong, successful board certification organization gives credibility to mesotherapy as a treatment option. It legitimizes our field and raises mesotherapy to the level that other board certified specialties experience. The American Board of Mesotherapy has emerged as the leading organization advocating quality physician training and patient safety. The certification examination in mesotherapy provides professional assessment of physician preparation to perform mesotherapy in a competent, patient-centric, safe environment.

The American Board of Mesotherapy is a non-political, not-for-profit organization. All interested MD and DO practitioners who are qualified are welcome to apply for the upcoming “Board Certification” examination. The examination is given various times throughout the year in different locations.

This article is a call for your help. The visionaries among you will see that my views are meant for the good of us all. My involvement in mesotherapy for almost 5 years has taught me a number of things. The most important is that a unified body is needed to fight the problems that face us. It is time that you take up your responsibility. You must support the American Journal of Mesotherapy and you must become board certified by the American Board of Mesotherapy. Doing these two things will dramatically enhance our field.

If you would like additional information about the American Board of Mesotherapy, wish to inquire about how you may become involved with the Board, or wish to apply for the upcoming Board Certification Examination in Mesotherapy, you may do so at

www.americanboardofmesotherapy.us

About the Author:

Robert P. Pitera, MD, was one of the first practitioners of mesotherapy in the United States and has a successful practice in New York City. He is on staff at a NYC teaching hospital. Dr Pitera gave the first CME-accredited lecture on mesotherapy to resident and attending physicians in a US teaching hospital setting in June 2004. Dr Pitera is the current vice president of the American Board of Mesotherapy and serves on the boards of directors of the American Society of Mesotherapy and the American Journal of Mesotherapy. Dr Pitera has lectured on mesotherapy internationally and is available to lecture on request. Dr Pitera offers private and semi-private mesotherapy training.

Contact Dr Pitera at:

212-947-2626

info@Meso-spa.com

info@aesthetic-mesotherapy-training.com

Robert P. Pitera, MD

20 Park Avenue Suite 1A

New York, NY 10016

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