Acne and rosacea management for men

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In a report released March 2014 by the American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, the top five surgical procedures for men were liposuction, eyelid surgery, rhinoplasty, male breast reduction, and ear surgery. However, the rate of noninvasive cosmetic procedures and sales of men’s grooming products is one of the leading segments of the beauty industry.

Although most scientific research and media are focused on the female aesthetic, understanding the specific needs of your male patients is key to patient satisfaction. Most men are generally less aware than are women of the treatment options and risks and benefits of procedures. Men also prefer treatments with less downtime and natural-looking results. This column continues our miniseries on aesthetic dermatology for the male patient.

In a general dermatology practice, there are several skin concerns often identified by male patients, and acne and rosacea are among them.

**Acne:** Men generally have thicker, more sebaceous skin than that of women. Although acne is a very common problem in teens and young men, there is a growing trend of cases of cystic acne in adult men who consume popular protein meal replacement or muscle enhancing shakes that contain whey protein. Whey is a protein derived from cow’s milk. Milk and dairy products act by increasing insulin-like growth factor 1, which has been linked to acne. Although few case reports have shown a link between dietary whey supplementation and acne, in my practice, men with cystic acne who report using whey supplementation products have had almost complete resolution of their acne without medical intervention after discontinuing these products.

**Rosacea:** Men have a higher density of facial blood vessels than women do, and often seek treatment for telangiectasias and overall facial erythema. For papulopustular rosacea, common treatments include oral antibiotics, topical antibiotics, topical azaleic acid, and topical anti-inflammatory medications. For erythematotelangiectatic rosacea, Mirvaso (brimonidine), a topical vasoconstrictor, can be applied to the skin for 8-12 hours of marked reduction in facial erythema. Although theoretically a great option for patients suffering from erythema, the effects of topical brimonidine are transient, and the gel requires daily application with no long-term benefit. Vascular laser treatments are effective for telangiectasias for both men
and women. However, men with more granulomatous or phymatous rosacea often need a combination of treatments including antibiotics, oral isotretinoin and fractional ablative lasers.

**Resources:**

American Society for Plastic Surgery 2012 statistics.

“Whey protein precipitating moderate to severe acne flares in 5 teenaged athletes,” *Cutis 2012;90:70-2.*

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