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NOTABLE NOTES

Sugaring—Modern Revival of an Ancient Egyptian Technique for Hair Removal

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The practice of hair removal dates as far back as 30 000 years.¹ Over the centuries, hair removal technology has improved from the use of crude tools to advanced laser techniques.¹ There are 2 main methods of hair removal. Depilation removes the hair shaft above the skin surface and includes shaving and chemical creams. In contrast, epilation removes hair from the root and permits a longer period before hair regrowth. Epilatory techniques include plucking, threading, waxing, and the ancient art of sugaring.

The ancient Egyptians were believed to have developed sugaring as a technique for hair removal, possibly driven by the need to improve hygiene by those living amidst the Middle Eastern desert climate, or for cultural and religious reasons.² A paste is prepared by mixing precise proportions of sugar, lemon juice, and water. The mixture is heated until an amber color is achieved and then cooled to a comfortable temperature.³ The substance is then applied in the direction of hair growth and then removed by applying a cloth on top of the paste and pulling quickly in the opposite direction to facilitate removal.^{1,3}

Sugaring provides a more cost-effective alternative to other hair removal techniques while reducing the risk of skin traumatization and scarring seen with other methods, such as shaving and hot waxing.³ Sugaring differs from waxing in that it only adheres to the hair and can be effectively used to remove hairs as small as 1/16 inch, whereas waxing requires hairs to be ¼ inch or longer. Consequently, sugaring results in less discomfort and redness after hair removal when compared with hot waxing.³ In addition, sugar may provide moisture to the skin and is hypoallergenic by its nature. The advantages of the water-based sugar substance are that it can penetrate the follicle more easily, removing addi-

tional hairs with less breakage, which leads to a potentially longer time before hair regrowth, and the skin can be conveniently cleaned with water alone.^{2,3}

In recent years, societal norms have shifted to prize the use of more natural ingredients, and this ancient Egyptian technique aligns well with these values. Consequently, sugaring has experienced a modern revival. More salons are offering the service to clients, and a variety of ready-made products are commercially available for use at home. Nonetheless, the beauty of sugaring lies in its simplicity, and the cost-effective ingredients further sweeten the deal.

Sugaring is a safe technique that has been practiced for centuries, can be done at home, and is ideal for most candidates limited by other hair removal methods.

Therefore, dermatologists should know about this simple technique to be able to inform their patients about an alternative hair removal option.

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