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### Interview with Dr Barry Lycka & Dr Adam Schaffner

**Dr Barry Lycka** cosmetic dermatologist from Edmonton, Alberta is talking today with

**Dr Adam Schaffner** triple board certified plastic surgeon from Park Avenue, New York City.

One of the reasons why we are the number one show on the internet on Cosmetic Surgery is that we concentrate on subjects like rejuvenation, and today we are going to talk about new advances in facial rejuvenation, new drugs, new things that are coming soon – or are here now – and that we are really excited about.

***Welcome, Dr Schaffner!***

***What is one of the newest, exciting things that you see coming out at the moment?***

Well here in the USA we have a number of new technologies, new injectables, that are helping patients to rejuvenate their appearance. One thing that was recently recommended for approval by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is ATX-101 which helps to dissolve fat in the chin and the submental region. For those individuals who have had previous liposuction and have the need for a 'touchup' or alternatively are looking for a non-surgical alternative to helping to address fat in that area, this injectable medication is something which offers an alternative. In addition it can also be used 'off label' if approved by the FDA for other areas outside of the head and neck region.

Dr Lycka has been familiar with this whole concept for a number of years, one of the materials that we started to use, which we had to compound ourselves was something called Lipodissolve. It was an emulsifier of fat plus a carrier of fat called phosphatidylcholine and the two together seemed to work very well. After further study we just used the emulsifier and people were pretty happy with that.

***Dr Lycka believes that the ATX-101 is just the emulsifier that seems to work. Is that true?***

Dr Schaffner's understanding is that, whilst it is a proprietary formulation, and the company has not made full disclosure pending approval by the FDA, but yes, that seems to be correct. In Dr Lycka's experience it works for soft fat and for a number of patients, it is non-surgical so many people are happy with it but the biggest problem is that it can be fairly painful in that area and if it has to be repeated, then with each subsequent treatment there is less pain. Dr Lycka considers it a useful agent – certainly not as good as liposuction but then again not everybody wants liposuction.

Yes – people are looking for non-surgical alternatives to achieve the desired results. There is a reason that people still perform surgery because it is difficult to achieve the same level of results that surgery can provide, without surgery. And of course the skill of the doctor in surgery is paramount in making many things happen.

***Couple of other things that are coming out – Coolsculpting – the technique that freezes fat is coming out with some new hand pieces that allow new areas to be treated.***

Yes that is correct. When we freeze the fat, it is called Cryolipolysis and it helps to dissolve the fat through a process called programmed cell death. After freezing the fat we can get a reduction in the volume of fat in a given area. Initially we saw great results in the abdomen / love handles / hip region, using an applicator which not only froze the fat but also used suction. There are some areas which are very difficult to get adequate suction force on so they introduced an applicator which was flatter and without suction. We have seen a great number of areas that can be additionally treated because of that. And of course we are now looking at other areas, such as the area underneath the chin, with the recent focus on ATX-101 to help patients who desire improvement in that area.

***So we have two means now, that are not surgical, that will help people with that under chin area. People are looking for those non-surgical options, as they can't take downtime any more. People are so busy they are always looking for the minimum of downtime and these options certainly provide that.***

Agreed. People go into Dr Schaffner's office every day and say they know what can be done with surgery, but with time involved with the procedure, and time involved with the recovery, and the costs associated or the commitment to work and family, people will say that they just can't do it but they are willing to accept a result that may not be as significant or in a single treatment session but which in exchange will allow them to go ahead and have some improvement but return to everyday activity much more quickly.

Yes Adam, people are so busy we are having to do things which are not quite as good because patients can't afford the downtime. It's always a tradeoff but this is where modern surgery is going. Things are being done in a kinder, gentler way, even in our surgical techniques we are much less aggressive than we used to be. And there is better healing and faster recovery.

Yes, less is more sometimes, and we have to know when to say when and just because we can do something doesn't mean that we should do something. Patients don't want that extreme look, they don't want to be overdone, and they want natural results, so we are actually doing more for patients by not being as aggressive.

***Well that brings us to fillers, Adam. There has been a huge change to the extent that some people are calling them the liquid facelift because literally they help lift areas, add volume and as a person gets older, one of the big changes is that we lose volume in our faces.***

Yes that is exactly right. Clinical studies have shown that we lose both soft tissue volume and bone volume as we age and what we try to do with injectable fillers, or using fat, is to restore volume and then in addition, those patients who desire a lift can do so using fillers, realizing that the lift achieved by using fillers of course is not going to be the same as that achieved by surgery but will give some degree of lift to restore some of the position lost by age.

Yes this is where the whole field has changed. Up here in Canada we realize this a fair bit because fillers are certainly getting much better than they used to be. When Dr Lycka first started collagen was the only filler which was poor as it only lasted a short period of time, it caused a host of allergies so pre-testing was required but now we have a host of HA (hyaluronic acid) products that have certainly revolutionized our world.

***Dr Lycka understands that Voluma is newly available in the USA?***

Yes it is already available in the States, and has been for about a year now. They have had a good amount of success with it because not only does it provide a significant volume especially to the cheek or midface, but it also helps to provide a good degree of lifting capacity at the same time. It has been a game changer, in Canada you have had it for a lot longer and have more experience with it, but for us in the USA it has been exciting having Voluma.

Well yes we Canadians are fortunate in that way in that we bring in devices such as these fillers a little faster than in the States. And it's always nice to be able to get a little ahead. Voluma was the first of a whole family of fillers that are longer acting, which give volume replacement without distorting the tissue and they are more cross linked so they stay longer. That is a benefit as well as a disadvantage. The more cross linking there is, if something goes wrong, then they are harder to get rid of. But also if there are problems then the problems are delayed, to around the 18 month area so we don't start seeing the problems until then. Fortunately the side effects are fairly rare, but when they do occur in maybe one in a thousand, they are significant, so we must always be aware that everything that comes out new as a filler, then not all the side effects will be known about at the beginning. It takes time for us to explore those and understand them. Dr Lycka still wouldn't hesitate to use these materials but it is wise to have a cautionary eye towards them, a bit of a jaundiced eye, so to speak.

That is very good advice for any product, material or technique that we are considering in plastic surgery or dermatology. The fact is that when something is new, just because something is exciting and we know it has good results in the short term, doesn't mean that we know everything about it in the longer term.

***Adam, one of the things that is coming out more and more is that some of the things that we used to use are coming back again! One of those is the thread lift.***

Dr Lycka wrote a paper on the thread lift over a decade ago, called the Aptos thread lift. It was something that he really liked a lot and it became unavailable. People used to come in 15 years later wanting new threads but they were not available. It was exciting and was a way to lift the face and it would be exciting to have some of these back to help us in certain situations, because we don't just see volume loss but falling.

That's very true. There has been a new focus on volume but we still have tissues that fall downward and inward with age so in addition to restoring volume, it is good to have a restoration of position also of the tissue that has fallen. We still have the option to do so surgically through traditional means. When using the threads we are using them in a minimally invasive fashion, trying to avoid the full surgical procedure. Dr Schaffner has a good amount of experience with the contour threads and in many cases it was successful but not without complications, the materials were first of all permanent then dissolvable, and with the permanent materials there was sometimes a problem with extrusion or sutures coming out in certain cases, so they were a bit unpredictable. So because of the problems associated with them they had a challenge with reputation that they had obtained amongst some patients, and so were no longer available. There is however, new interest in this and we will have to see whether or not there is a resurgence of interest in a long term basis with the thread concept but right now it is something that is in the mind of a lot of people but Dr Schaffner is not seeing it widely used within the United States.

***A couple more things before we close... new types of Botox coming out – and topical Botox as well?***

There are – through research injectable as well as topical forms of Botox are being considered. It would be an advantage to have a topical form because nobody likes needles and nobody wants to have an injection if they can achieve the same results without an injection. For those looking for a longer lasting result, the injectable form in preliminary research studies has shown it has a longer duration of action compared to standard Botox or Xeomin formulations currently available. If in fact this does prove to be true then this would be a game changer because instead of someone coming into the office every 3 to 4 months they would be coming much less frequently, potentially once or twice per year at most.

***We also have new machines that tighten the skin, which heat the skin to get tissue tightening - also on the way?***

At the moment we have devices that use ultrasound such as Ulthera, we have a device that uses external radio frequency such as Thermage, and we have another device that uses both internal and external radio frequency called thermex which is relatively new in the USA and has had a rapid adoption by many plastic surgeons and dermatologists because of the multiple uses it has with both internal minimally invasive as well as external applications for such things as festoons, jowls, peri-orbital rejuvenation (around the eyes). It is very exciting again for people who want rejuvenation and want an improvement, willing to have a little bit of downtime but are also willing to have less improvement at one sitting in exchange for having minimally or non-invasive treatment sessions.

***So in summary, Adam, a very exciting time for us to be practicing dermatology & plastic surgery. Newer, better, kinder methods are coming and we are getting better at doing this, with less downtime, and patients are benefitting, and doctors are also benefitting as there is less trauma for patients. We like to cause the least amount of trauma possible.***

Yes – as Dr Schaffner gets more advance in practice every year, he sees the advancements in technology and science and the ability to help patients using the latest products, medication, tools, instruments and lasers, and energy based devices, are all allowing us to do things in a more minimally invasive fashion with less downtime, and a more rapid recovery. And at the end of the day, in a safer fashion and that is what we all want to do – take good care of our patients, maximize safety, minimize downtime and maximize results.

***As always a pleasure to have you on the show, Adam, as you really help our listeners to understand things as we move into this field of cosmetic surgery.***

A pleasure as always – Thank you for inviting me!

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