CAN LASER CURE NAIL FUNGUS?

Many people are uncomfortable with thick, brittle, yellow nails caused by fungus. There are many topical and oral medications, but they all have limitations. Because of this killing nail fungus is a hot topic right now with podiatrists and, because of this, they are waking up to the value of laser therapy.

In this study, (Photochem and Photobiol 2009 Nov-Dec;85(6):1364-74), infrared laser was used to treat toenail fungus with a power density of 5.66 W/cm². The goal of the study was to find out what dose would be most effective at killing fungus while not damaging tissue.

They tested a number of organisms, including the fungus Trichophyton rubrum (Tinea unguium is the organism responsible for nail fungus). They noted that the laser treatment caused a decrease in membrane function and an increase in oxygen generation (ROS), a sign of cellular stress. The authors postulate that these wavelengths caused damage to the cell, harming its ability to function properly. No observable damage to the nail matrix or mucous membranes was observed, yet photodamage to the pathogens was achieved. What this study points out is that to kill the fungus, one needs a laser that is hot enough to damage the fungal cells, but low enough to not burn the tissue.

LASER BRAIN TREATMENT

There is a lot of interest about using low level lasers for the treatment of various types of brain dysfunction and damage. In this Russian study, a combination of low level laser and electrical stimulation was applied to the treatment of 576 patients with neurosurgical problems including the loss of brain function, nervous system lesions of traumatic origin, and vascular problems.

Their approach, they claim, allows brain function to be completely restored, creating normal function in the nervous system. Because there are now a number of well controlled studies documenting brain regeneration with low level laser, it is intriguing to see this continuing steady stream of studies from around the world that demonstrate the safety and efficacy of regenerating brain function with low level laser. (Vopr Kurotol Fizioter Lech Fiz Kult 2009 Nov-Dec;(6):3-11)

LASER BENEFITS CANCER PATIENTS

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About the Author

Curtis Turchin, M.A., D.C. has a B.A. in pre-medical studies from the University of Southern California, an M.A. in Special Education from San Francisco State University, and a D.C. from Palmer College. He is in private practice near San Francisco using manual therapies and lasers in a practice with a physician. He has published 3 books, more than 20 journal articles, and has been extensively interviewed on radio and television. Dr. Turchin is the author of Light and Laser Therapy: Clinical
One of the beautiful aspects of cold or low level laser therapy is the lack of proven side effects. However, many researchers sound caution when it comes to treating cancer. The problem with this caution is that it contradicts a lot of new research showing benefit with cancer patients, especially those suffering from oral mucositis, a condition with painful mouth lesions as a side effect of chemotherapy and radiation.

In this study from a cancer center (Curr Opin Clin Onc 2010 Feb 24), they concluded that low-level laser was a promising therapy for prevention and treatment of mucositis for the cancer patients in their study. As we see more studies coming out showing the safety and value of treating cancer patients and damaged brain tissue, it is becoming obvious that we have only scratched the surface of what we can do with low level lasers.

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I will try to bring you unbiased, evidence based information on a regular basis to help you understand this new and exciting modality. If you would like to see any particular topics or have any comments or suggestions, please email me, Curtis Turchin, MA, DC at: dr.turchin@yahoo.com (yes, that is dr dot turchin @ yahoo.com)

Sincerely,

Dr. Curtis Turchin

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