
skin | vitamin A

by Rob and Carol Trow



TOPICAL RETINOL IMPROVES FINE wrinkles associated with natural aging. Each month when we read the headlines of our professional publications, something new invariably appears to peak our curiosity. For a moment, we hope that the proverbial magic in a jar has been found so that we can offer our patients and clients even better treatments and products.

This month's headlines were no exception; however, the research does not uncover anything dramatically new. The findings have once again proven the importance of vitamin A in skin care.

We have known about vitamin A for close to a century, yet it is not well understood by clients and patients. That is our fault. We have failed to educate our clients about the fact that while vitamin A is the most effective skin care ingredient, it takes time to work. But it does indeed work, producing long lasting, sustainable results.

A research team from the University of Michigan was the latest to once again demonstrate the importance and efficacy of vitamin A in skin care. The headlines, not only in the United States but worldwide, proclaimed in bold letters: **Vitamin**

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A (retinol) Effaces Wrinkles in Naturally Aged Skin. Thus, retinol has the potential to deliver retinoic acid-like effects to human skin with improved tolerability.

In May, *The Archives of Dermatology* published a report of a small, double blind, vehicle-controlled study of elderly patients. Studies of this type are rare in our field. After 24 weeks of treatment, proof was found that topical retinol improves fine wrinkles associated with natural aging. Continuing, the researchers believe that a stronger, healthier skin matrix that was retinol induced makes the skin more likely to withstand injury and even ulcer formation, in addition to improving appearance. In essence, healthier and more beautiful skin can result from the use of properly formulated and packaged vitamin A.

Another study conducted by Manchester University in the UK also issues a favorable report about the effects of vitamin A on aging and photo-damaged skin. The use of vitamin A showed an increase in the production of glycosaminoglycans and procollagen, two skin com-

ponents in the treated areas exposed to retinol. It is important that any quality skin care regime must include vitamin A in an appropriate format and strength. Many over the counter products do not contain adequate levels of vitamin A, nor are they packaged to protect and maintain the efficacy of the product. A finding also demonstrates that one need not rely on the acid form to get and sustain results.

Look for professional products that contain vitamin A in one or more of the following forms in meaningful strengths: retinyl palmitate, retinyl acetate and retinol—preferably in a step up line to allow the skin to acclimate to vitamin A and avoid retinoid reactions. A significant advantage to using the above mentioned forms of vitamin A is that they can effectively be converted to retinoic acid at the cellular level, thereby providing similar results to the more irritating forms, resulting in higher use compliance and better outcomes. ■

Rob Trow and Carol Trow, BSN are co-founders and owners of *DermaConcepts USA*, the exclusive distributor of *Environ Skin Care* in the United States. Rob Trow previously served as president of a privately held company. Trow holds two masters degrees, and completed his doctoral studies at Harvard University. Carol Trow has served as director of marketing for a Fortune 1000 company, and founded her own marketing and consulting firm specializing in practice development for plastic surgeons, dermatologists, attorneys and CPAs. Together, the Trows have published over 100 articles for the esthetics industry.