

AESTHETIC

Advancing the Art and Science of Aesthetic Medicine

Medicine

Revolutionary
Approaches to
Light and Laser
Rejuvenation

Male
Enhancement
Surgery

Botox:
The Here
and Now

Fat Grafting
with Platelet
Rich Plasma

Treatment of
Dermatosis
Papulosis Nigra
in Skin Types IV,
V and VI



AESTHETIC PATIENTS CAN be hard to please. The key reason is the simple fact that the aesthetic patient will eventually hand the doctor a credit card and not an insurance card. The credit card payment completely changes the patient's expectations of a surgeon's work. When those expectations are not met, the patient can become aggressive, using all existing technological means to bad-mouth the physician to friends and strangers, both in person and online.

Even one unhappy patient can negatively impact a doctor's reputation forever. The Internet provides a variety of ways for patients to connect and exchange information about doctors, procedures and complications. Patients can also exchange pictures and videos, chatting with the world about the doctor as a physician and as a person. Established Internet social networks have no screening rules. Everything is accepted – true and false. And false information on the Internet can damage a doctor's good name in a way that cannot be undone.

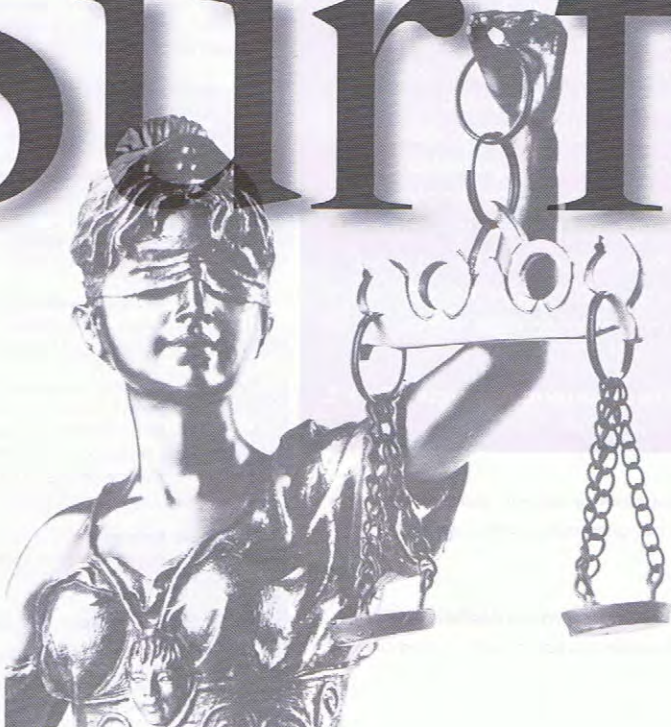
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Today, filing a lawsuit against an aesthetic/cosmetic doctor costs the patient nothing. Every lawyer is happy to take a case against an aesthetic/cosmetic doctor without any money paid by the patient, because every aesthetic/cosmetic doctor carries malpractice insurance that, in the worst case scenario, will pay the bill.

Beyond the Surface

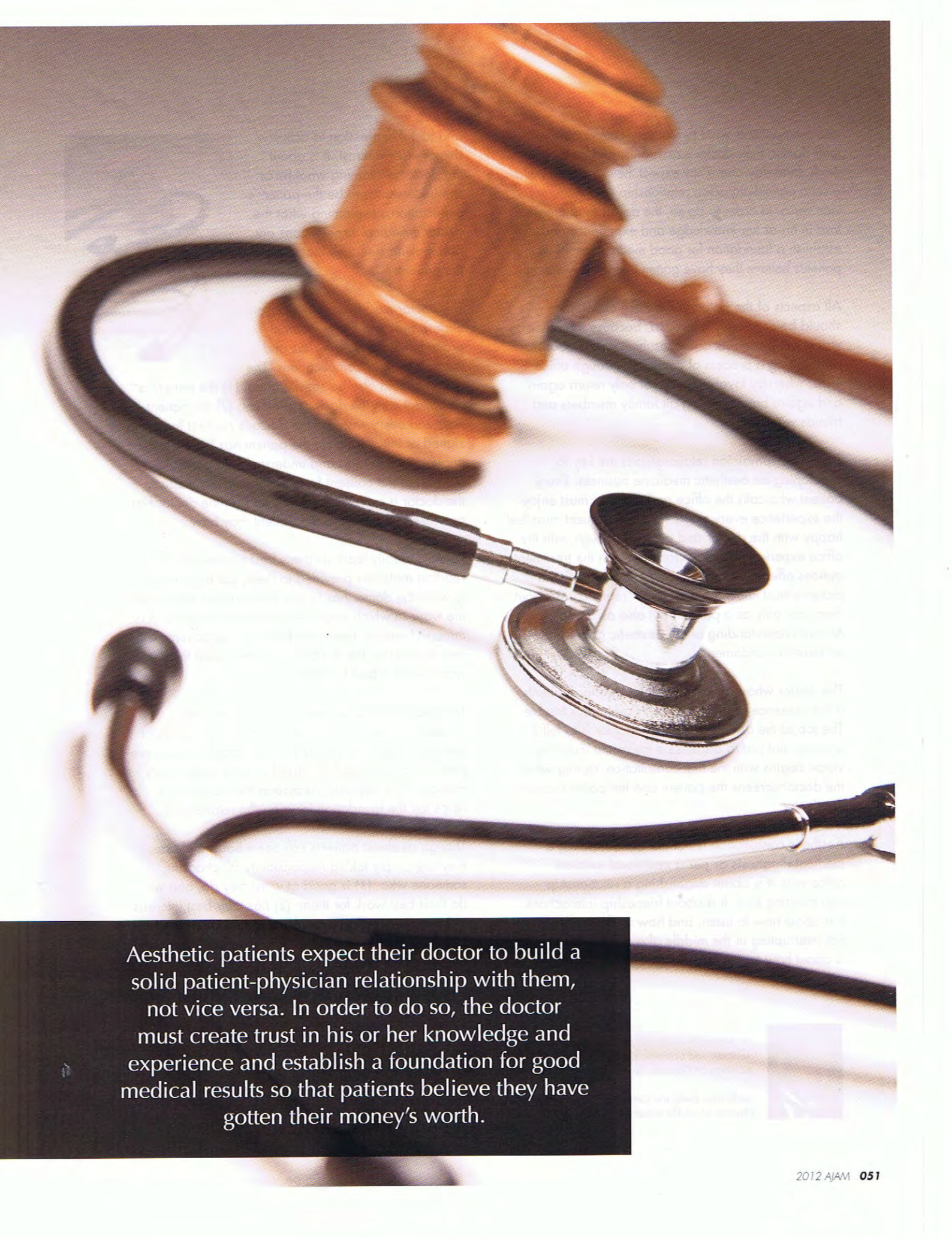
Dr. Alexander Krakovsky



Part 1

There is no company, society or business that protects the doctor from this type of situation. Every doctor has to consider these things before starting an aesthetic medicine practice.

No matter how phenomenal a physician's medical or surgical skill, how encouraging his or her bedside manner, or how many times he or she goes out of the way to meet a patient's expectations, no doctor in the world can please every patient every single time.



Aesthetic patients expect their doctor to build a solid patient-physician relationship with them, not vice versa. In order to do so, the doctor must create trust in his or her knowledge and experience and establish a foundation for good medical results so that patients believe they have gotten their money's worth.

Aesthetic patients want to feel very comfortable with their doctor, their doctor's assistants, and their doctor's work, from day one. They expect their doctor to build a solid patient-physician relationship with them, not vice versa. In order to do so, the doctor must create trust in his or her knowledge and experience and establish a foundation for good medical results so that patients believe they have gotten their money's worth.

All aspects of the patient office-visit experience should be constantly improved, because the office visit is not just about one consultation. It is about establishing a process of continuity through office visits, whereby loyal patients not only return again and again, but also bring all family members and friends with them.

The patient-physician relationship is the key to developing an aesthetic medicine business. Every patient who calls the office and walks in must enjoy the experience every single time. The patient must feel happy with the doctor and pleased enough with the office experience to move forward with the treatment options offered by the doctor. Aesthetic medicine patients must know that the doctor really cares about them, not only as a patient, but also as a person. Mutual understanding of the aesthetic goal to be achieved is fundamental.

The doctor whose only criterion for treating patients is the presence of a credit card is asking for trouble. The job of the aesthetic medicine doctor is to fulfill a vision, not just to dispense a treatment. Fulfilling a vision begins with the first consultation, during which the doctor screens the patient and the patient screens the doctor.


Aesthetic consultation is not just about making a medical diagnosis as per a traditional medical office visit. It is about establishing a relationship and building trust. It is about friendship interactions. It is about how to listen, and how to show it by not interrupting in the middle of a conversation. It is about how to use body language, eye contact,

and facial expression to actively demonstrate interest. It is about the doctor explaining what he or she understands to be the patient's expectations, explaining what the doctor's medical expectations are, and making sure they match those of the patient.

The doctor must be sure the patient understands that every medical procedure carries both risks and the potential for complications. The doctor should also be satisfied that: (1) the patient is compliant with the doctor's protocol; (2) the patient has read every word on the doctor's consent form and signed or initialed it; (3) the patient has been given enough time to read and understand, in particular, the part of the consent form that lists the procedures the doctor is going to perform; and (4) the doctor has answered all questions the patient may have.

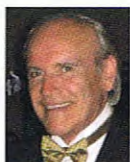
Patients usually learn all these best not only by reading materials provided to them, but by listening to what the doctor has to say. Patients also learn from the ways in which they are treated by the doctor. It is through hearing, seeing and feeling that patients will decide whether the doctor truly cares about them and wants what is best for them.

The doctor should definitely do his or her best for every patient – the result should satisfy the doctor and should be of a quality that the doctor would have performed on himself or herself or on a close family member. This approach reassures the patient and helps lay the foundation for a trustful relationship.

Though aesthetic patients can seem hard to please, they are simply taking responsibility for choosing someone who: (1) is good at what they do, and will do their best work for them; (2) has their best interests at heart, and will only recommend and do procedures that are right for them; and (3) cares about them, and not just about their money. 



In the next issue: **Beyond the Surface: Part 2**



Dr. Alexander Krakovsky is the Founder and Medical Director of the International Aesthetic and Cosmetic Center in La Jolla, CA. He is a Fellow of the International Academy of Cosmetic Surgery and of the Asian-Pacific Academy of Cosmetic Surgery.

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Beyond the Surface

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