Step Ahead seminar, 26 April 2016: looking back at the highlights of the day

At the end of April, a select group of practitioners and industry experts graced the stage at this year’s Step Ahead in Aesthetics seminar in Manchester. In this month’s issue, Yvonne Senior reflects on the best sessions of the day, sharing key points of the conference presentations, and highlights the benefits of being part of a smaller, more intimate event.

The Private Independent Aesthetic Practices Association (PIAPA) was ecstatic to once again combine forces with Merz Aesthetics to co-host our Step Ahead in Aesthetics conference on 26 April 2016. The sold out seminar returned to Manchester with great zest as members and delegates were treated to a packed agenda full of practical business and educational medical presentations of the highest calibre.

As always, the agenda combined essential business advice to keep individual practitioners and business owners on track, with extensive medical presentations that delved into both complications and unique treatment techniques. Delegates walked away from the day expressing how much more confident they felt and that they were revived by the information and guidance imparted by our expert speakers.

The morning kicked off with Pam Underdown of Aesthetic Business Transformations. Her topic—Do you feel like your business is running you instead of the other way round?—certainly struck a chord with many in the audience who manage and run their own clinic(s).

One of Pam’s key messages was to put the time in to make your business system-dependent, not people-dependent. Three systems were described to help owners achieve this. I have since visited Pam’s website and found an array of useful resources, some of which are free. Since the event, I have had my nose stuck in one of the books she recommended—Grace Marshall’s (2012) 21 Ways to Manage the Stuff that Sucks Up Your Time—and I’ve found that there are definitely more than 21 ways in which my time is stolen from me.

As many of you know, Health Education England recently recommended that all practitioners performing toxin and filler treatments should acquire a level 7 qualification. In line with this, Emma Senior and Linda Mather were invited to outline Northumbria University’s postgraduate certificate along with details of the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) process.

Many of us have been fortunate enough to attend lectures covering complications; however, in her talk, Tahera Bhojani unusually and usefully took the subject back to basics before covering the dramatic and serious. She covered those issues we deal with each day in our practice, such as bruising, swelling, pain and poor aesthetic outcomes. She then applied evidence-based knowledge discussing how to prevent them and what to do when they do happen.

Throughout her presentation she stressed the importance of understanding both prevention and treatment, reminding us constantly that we are health professionals first and business people second. She then went onto the more serious and dramatic complications that happen less frequently however, in her talk, Tahera Bhojani unusually and usefully took the subject back to basics before covering the dramatic and serious. She covered those issues we deal with each day in our practice, such as bruising, swelling, pain and poor aesthetic outcomes. She then applied evidence-based knowledge discussing how to prevent them and what to do when they do happen.

Kate Goldie’s presentation was the pinnacle of the day with the full afternoon dedicated to clinical cases using the Merz Aesthetics range of dermal fillers to treat a wide variety of indications. The theme was the different approaches needed when assessing and treating the face of those aged 40 50 and 60 years, who represent a significant proportion of client bases.

Kate was both generous and inclusive in sharing her extremely significant knowledge of both the product range and how to achieve thoroughly amazing results. As she always does, she linked the assessment to the ageing process and underlying facial anatomy. Each procedure performed was rated in terms of both technical difficulty and risk, emphasising the fact that low difficulty does not necessarily translate to low risk and is anatomy-dependent.

PIAPA will have its work cut out to match such a fantastic agenda next year, but as always will strive to do so. It will also continue to keep delegate numbers capped at future conferences in order for those attending to benefit from opportunities to see demonstrations up close and discuss candidly their thoughts with all speakers and exhibitors.

References

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