

Electrology: A Permanent Fixture in the Hair Removal Industry

Kelly Hack*

Department of Journalism, University of Illinois, Illinois, United States

INTRODUCTION

“Many have experienced the suffering of low self-esteem, depression, and loss of femininity when dealing with unwanted hair growth,” says Lourdes Cornelius, Owner and Founder of Electrolysis for You. According to the American Family Physician, unwanted hair is a recurring problem that is often not addressed within the primary care setting [1]. Some physicians have neglected the issue altogether, leaving women in the dark. However, the process of removing unwanted hair permanently has given light to those who have begun the process of electrolysis.

DESCRIPTION

According to the Department of Medicine (Dermatology), electrolysis has been a process utilized by licensed technicians to achieve permanent hair removal since 1875. Dr. Charles Michel originally discovered the technique through the removal of ingrown hair within eyelashes (trichiasis) [2]. As opposed to non-permanent hair removal methods such as waxing or threading, electrolysis is the only U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved permanent hair removal process [3]. It is also largely recognized by the American Medical Association (AMA).

Electrolysis is a method of removing individual hairs from the face or body. It is versatile due to its ability in inhibiting new hair growth for all color skin and hair types—a major advantage when compared to non-permanent removal processes [3]. Medical advancement has led to the design of electrolysis by destroying the hair with chemical or heat energy by utilizing a fine sterile probe that is inserted into each hair follicle, and then carefully removed individually with tweezers [4].

There are three main methods of electrolysis:

- Galvanic, which converts normal body salts and water within the follicle into a chemical that destroys the papilla of each hair follicle.
- Thermolysis, also known as diathermy or radiofrequency, generating heat from the current, which cauterizes and destroys the dermal papilla.

- Blend, the combination of utilizing both the galvanic and thermolysis techniques [4].

Treatment is customized and measured by skin, hair, and how quickly each individual hair grows. During the course of treatments, constant and gradual modifications are implemented in efforts to receive optimal results. Energy is discharged into each hair follicle and the destruction is succeeded by heat (thermolysis) or a chemical reaction (galvanic), or combined with both techniques [4].

“95 percent of my clients have a hormonal imbalance such as menopause or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), but if a client follows the advised frequency of sessions, permanent hair growth will be achieved. It is imperative that open communication with your healthcare provider (dermatologist, endocrinologist) exists, in efforts to rule out other causes for growth while maximizing a desired outcome,” says Cornelius.

Electrology and the medical realm

“If a client is seeking to remove coarse hair so that they no longer have to deal with maintenance—an electrologist is who they need to work with,” says Cornelius.

According to Aesthetic Focus, non-permanent hair removal has dominated the market due to its known ability to remove hair for larger areas of the body. Although a significant reduction in hair can create desirable results, the non-permanent aspect has led to the medical or psychological need to seek permanent hair removal [4]. In efforts to assist medical doctors in addressing their patient’s concerns regarding excessive hair growth, it has been documented that although non-permanent hair removal can be a suitable remedy for a vast population, there is a dire need for a permanent one—hence the unveiling of electrolysis. Most clients that seek assistance in hair removal are concentrated on removing hair in the following regions:

Women—Face, eyebrows, breasts, lower abdomen, and inner thighs.

Men—In between the eyebrows, around the ears, and face (where ingrown hairs can develop in the beard) [2].

Correspondence to: Kelly Hack, Department of Journalism, University of Illinois, Illinois, United States, E-mail: med.benrejeb@gmail.com

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Understanding hair physiology

Hair is categorized into three types:

- Lanugo-soft hair, which is identified on the skin of a fetus.
- Vellus-non-pigmented soft and small hairs.
- Terminal-pigmented, longer, larger, and coarser hairs [5].

“It’s critical to listen to each client and understand how they want to maintain unwanted hair. Full transparency on how hair grows is crucial when working on hair during the anagen stage, which is when the hair is attached to the root -the most ideal stage when administering electrolysis,” says Cornelius.

What causes excessive hair growth?

Several factors must be considered when analyzing the culprit of unwanted hair growth. Often heredity and hormone levels play a significant role in the overproduction of hair follicles throughout the body [6]. Eighty five percent of hirsutism cases stem from conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome and idiopathic hyperandrogenism [6]. Hirsutism is the extreme growth of terminal hair in a typical male pattern in a female. It is also a sign of excessive androgen levels, and often associated with significant psychological stress. However, the disorder can be treated with electrolysis treatment for effective permanent hair elimination [6].

CONCLUSION

“The most rewarding part of being an electrologist is knowing that by removing unwanted hair, it gives the client their confidence back that was lost,” says Cornelius.

When experiencing hair growth in areas that are not typically known to grow hair, women especially feel frustration when the

endless maintenance takes a toll on their emotional well-being. Electrolysis provides a permanent solution to an ongoing condition. Cornelius lastly emphasizes that although electrolysis is permanent, it does require repeated entry into the same follicle. Throughout the process clients experience the results of electrolysis including hair that has become finer or less of it and that is the desired outcome that an electrologist strives to accomplish with every client they work with.

Lourdes Cornelius, is a licensed electrologist and her practice, “Electrolysis for You” is currently located in Winnetka, Niles, and Lincoln Park. For more information regarding her practice and the realm of electrology, visit Electrolysisforyou.com

Kelly Hack holds a Master’s of Science Degree in Journalism, along with a versatile professional portfolio including investigative, educational, feature, and profile writing. Hack strives to capitalize her knowledge-base to provide readers with information that is accurate, concise, and pertinent.

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