

Rosehip Oil — *Rosa Affinis Rubiginosa*

Rosehip oil is widely recognized for the effects of the natural topical trans-retinoic acid (vitamin A) it contains. The unique properties of rosehip oil were first discovered in 1983 by a team of researchers from the Faculty of Chemistry and Pharmacology at the University of Concepcion (Chile).

Drs. Pareja and Kehl

In December 1988 two researchers published a paper titled Contributions to Identification and Application of Active Components Contained in Rosa Aff. Rubiginosa. The authors were Dr Bertha Pareja, Principal Professor, Faculty of Pharmacology and Biochemistry, University of San Marcos, Lima, Peru and Dr Horst Kehl, from the School of Pharmacology of the University of Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri, USA. (Dr. Kehl took part in the effort in his capacity of Visiting Professor at the San Marcos University.)

In a two-year study, rosehip oil was applied to 180 patients with surgical, traumatic and burn scars, as well as to a group suffering from premature aging of the skin. The results were remarkable. Continuous application of rosehip oil effectively attenuated scars and wrinkles, halted advancement of premature aging, and restored lost skin natural color and tone.

The action of rosehip oil in helping to regenerate damaged skin tissues was originally attributed to its high content of unsaturated essential fatty acids. These acids are important for healthy skin (when taken internally) for they are components of cell membranes and precursors of prostaglandine/leucotriens. Their presence did not successfully explain the regenerative effects of rosehip oil. Drs. Pareja and Kehl, identified trans-retinoic acid as the component responsible for these effects.

Trans-retinoic acid is a derivative of Vitamin A and is marketed as Tretinoin. The therapeutic effects of Tretinoin in the treatment of a variety of dermatology disorders have been well-researched and recognized for almost 30 years. Tretinoin can produce quick and positive changes in the skin, but because it is a very strong substance, it must be applied under medical supervision.

Rosehip oil produces the benefits of Tretinoin, but without secondary side effects, because the trans-retinoic acid is contained in a natural state as part of a complex of unsaturated fatty acids. The action is controlled and slowly released, eliminating the risk of overdoses.

The following summaries are based on the Pareja/Kehl paper.

SURGICAL SCARS Ten women, aged between 45 and 68, were selected who had undergone unilateral or bilateral mastectomy. Applications of rosehip oil were made, starting on the day when the surgical stitches were removed. After washing the area with tepid water and soap and carefully drying, the oil was applied by soft massage. After three months of applying twice daily (morning and evening) it was noted that the scars were less apparent, without lumps and that skin elasticity had improved and the color of the area had improved significantly.

We carried out these observations for four months after the operations. The treating doctors indicated that skin conditions improved considerably, allowing implantation of prosthesis or plastic surgery in far better conditions than with patients who had not been treated.

PHOTOAGED SKIN Changes produced on skin by the action of the sun (photoaging or dermatoheliosis) are very common in all countries of warm climate. Exposure to sun causes important morphological changes in skin. Dermatoheliosis appears in different ways and varying intensity ranging from surface wrinkles, active keratosis and variation in the distribution of the melanin granules.

For this test volunteers were selected from people who usually spend the 3 months of summer in resorts by the sea or who go to the beach every day. The tests were carried out on 20 women aged

between 25 and 35. The most frequently noted signs were surface wrinkles and brown spots. All applied rosehip oil on the face during four months (May to August, 1988). Observations were made every eight days. Significant changes were noted starting on the third week. Surface wrinkles started to disappear and spots started to fade. By the end of the fourth month skin presented a smooth and fresh aspect and the spots had almost disappeared.

Scars are a permanent visible reminder of a significant event in a person's life and can be a reminder of an unhappy or bad experience. There are many different techniques to lessen the visibility of scar tissues including cosmetic surgery, pressure garments, the use of locally injected steroids and silicone gel sheets. Rosehip oil offers a simple, inexpensive, non-invasive alternative for diminishing disfiguring scars. With continued daily use scars become softer and less prominent.

Dr. Hans Harbst

Dr Hans Harbst, surgeon and radiotherapist presently practicing in Chile, graduated in radio-oncology, radiology and nuclear medicine at the Nuclear Research Centre of the University of Heidelberg, Germany. Dr Harbst heads the Department of Radio-oncology of the Indisa Clinic in Santiago and is also head of the Department of Radiology of the Chilean Air Force Hospital in Santiago.

Dr Harbst has extensive experience in the application of rosehip oil for treating skin alterations, especially secondary dermatitis which takes place as a result of radiotherapy.

RADIATION SKIN REACTIONS "I work with many patients who have undergone surgery and therefore have scars. Subsequent radiation causes secondary reactions to the skin such as inflammation, darkening and dermatitis. This presents an aesthetic problem for patients, but the application of rosehip oil has produced faster healing of these lesions. We have achieved a loosening of the tension in the skin with rosehip oil. The results have been very good with some patients and spectacular with others. I have applied rosehip oil on all types of skin and on scars to reduce hyperpigmentation, flattening hypertrophy (bulky scars), and loosening up fibrous chords."

Dr. Leonardo Rusowsky

Dr Leonardo Rusowsky, surgeon at Enrique Deformes Hospital in Santiago, Chile, and acting president of the Corporation for Aid to Children with Burns has researched the healing properties of rosehip oil and has stated that it improves the texture and quality of skin by increasing its elasticity and flattens out scarring and improves the color of scars and surrounding skin. To date, rosehip oil has helped in the recovery of thousands of burn victims and is currently being used by several teams of plastic surgeons in the treatment of scars.

Other References

Dr Fabiola Carbajal, M.D - "Results were superb using rosehip oil and cream in all our clinical studies, even with scars over 20 years old."

J.F. Oliver, Fats & Oils Journal No.25 Dec 1996 - "In a study of 90 patients who had suffered burns, a four-month treatment of rosehip oil resulted in 97% improvement in relation to their initial state. "

The foregoing information has been adapted from:

http://www.coventgardenlife.com/rosehip/rosehip_oil/rosehip_oil_scientific_studies.htm

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Please be sure to consult and follow the advice of your doctors on all medical matters.

Bruce A. Hopkins, LMT