**Avoid unprofessional skin clinics to prevent Severe Complications**

**By Michael Kanaabi Dollar**

With more and more ‘skin and beauty clinics’ mushrooming in most urban centres and neighborhoods, professional Dermatologists have warned the general public against opting for these so called skin clinics to treat skin defects and diseases other than just getting nail, hair treatment, facials and scrubs which are with in what cosmetologists and stylists can offer.

While speaking to this publication, Consultant Dermatologist Dr. Ronald Katureebe a member of the interim committee of Uganda Dermatologists Association cautioned the general public “Always ask for the practicing certificate of the Dermatologist (Doctor) from the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council plus the medical license of the skin clinic you go to before you seek any medical skin treatment.”

This will help you avoid getting further complications as we have noticed more frequently these days among people whose skin conditions have been treated by non Professional Skin Doctors (Dermatologists) he adds.

**Common Skin Conditions that are Misdiagnosed by non Professional Dermatologists**

Incase some one has swellings on their skin, this person should seek out a Dermatologist immediately because these swellings could be early signs of skin cancer according to Dr. Katureebe.

“ Tampering with them may lead to worsening of situation as use of chemicals to try and remove them can spread the problem further” he says.

Much worse when located on sensitive parts of the body where a major nerve or blood vessel is in proximity, these can be damaged when tampered with by a non Professional leading to morbidity and death in worst case scenarios.

**Psoriasis**

This one is easily mistaken for being a fungal infection because the two look very alike.

Incases where anti fungals are given and no change is seen meaning one continues using them beyond recommended 14 days some times even going on for months a complication called Liver Toxicity will result which is quite costly and very inconveniencing when it comes to treatment.

**Skin Cancer and Discoloration**

 Discoloration many times is what non Professional skin clinics will see in early signs of skin cancer.

This according to Dr. Katureebe delays treatment yet it is known that early diagnosis and treatment of skin cancer can be life saving.

Incase one has skin moles that are not properly examined and treated, these can develop into skin cancer too.

**Eczema**

Often easily mistaken for skin infections, Eczema is not a skin infection and in many cases you find that patients have been given drugs for skin infections worsening the condition.

“ To solve this confusion , visiting a qualified Dermatologist immediately one notices any unusual changes to their skin for proper diagnosis and treatment is the way to go” Dr. Katureebe says.

Being an allergic condition, a Professional Dermatologist will easily notice it and prescribe adequate medication besides letting one know what they should use and not use to avoid triggering the allergic reaction again.

**Cosmetic skin surgeries (liposuction and Botox)**

Often times patients present with damage to their eyes, visual loss, wrinkles in the face and loss of skin tissues because skin procedures like Fillers and injections for liposuction (fat removal), Botox have been wrongly done.

“Severe reactions to anesthesia which becomes an emergency case that requires a proper hospital to manage is a complication beyond the scope of cosmetologists, in worst cases when it happens in an unprofessional skin clinic, death may happen to the patient” Dr. Katureebe emphasizes.

To save the situation the services of a well trained Anesthesiologist who understands the human body’s anatomy and muscle groups are required.

**Chemical Peels (Pills)**

Another prescription or procedure taken lightly by those operating unprofessional skin clinics is the use of Chemicals Peels, these are orally administered in form of tablets(pills). Their use is to peel off old skin, enable one look younger and also remove acne spots.

There are 3 types of these pills mild or superficial being the first category, medium and Deep Peels being the other categories.

Dr. Katureebe says from observation by a number of Professional Dermatologists, African skins react strongly to these peels because they have more melanin.

“As a result many show up with burns, permanent scars and severe damage to the skin resulting from misuse of these peels” Dr. Katureebe notes.

This results from the fact that most of the people who operate skin clinics and prescribe these peels do not understand the variance in strength of the different peels on the market.

Severe cases of the side effects these peels create manifest in deep acid looking burns with some patients ending up in Intensive Care at hospitals as they fight to regain their health he adds.

**Laser Procedures**

Unprofessional practitioners use Laser Procedures to treat large scars which is wrong, these are only supposed to be used to treat simple scars.

Further more they can also damage joints especially ligaments and tendon tissues if not well used.

Lasers when used unprofessionally can also lead to burns which create body scars, misuse can also result in infections and damage underlying body organs.

However they are exceptional when it comes to surgery, facial and skin rejuvenation when used properly by professionals.

**Cosmetics**

When non Professionals are recommending cosmetics for various skin types, they don’t bother to find out which products works for which skin type or which skin type is likely to have a negative reaction to a particular product Dr. Katureebe notes.

“They simply offer and recommend what is trending and what has worked for other people of different skin types minus considering the specific skin type, it’s needs and possible reactions to the cosmetics they are recommending, a case may arise for example where some one with normal skin is given products for sensitive skin types causing a sudden reaction which may require serious medication in form of injections and tablets to correct.”

There are also cases we have come across where patients have been using locally mixed lightening creams which contain steroids, mercury, hydroquinone which are harmful to the body when used for extended periods.

Side effects like reduced immunity of one’s skin, permanent patches specifically from longterm hydroquinone use, stretch marks and thinning of one’s skin will also result from abuse of these chemicals.

It should be noted that under proper medical supervision, hydroquinone may be used for a while to correct hyper pigmentation however when used for longer than recommended periods, the same product will lead to permanent patches.

Steroids should also be given for a short time that is 5 days to 2 weeks maximum.

When used continuously especially for skin lightening, the skin gets used and darkens abruptly when one stops using them forcing people into constant use which comes with other complications.

“Continuous use of products with these chemicals for over 6 months and even years may result into thinning of the skin, stretch marks and when they get into the blood stream they may cause High Blood Pressure, Osteoporosis and Diabetes.

In particular Mercury does damage the kidneys and nervous system and it’s not even used or recommended in medical prescription due to its harmful nature.

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