

Pioneer of non-invasive aesthetic medicine

Ophthalmologist José Raúl Montes is positioned as an international spokesperson.

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He has run a successful local oculoplastic surgery practice for 20 years, and is a professor at the University of Puerto Rico, Medical Sciences Campus. He is recognized as one of the world's best in his field and is frequently asked to share his expertise worldwide, in places such as Asia, Latin America, Europe and the United States.

However, for José Raúl Montes, whose career speaks for him, pessimism and bad news surrounding the country's medicine industry, in terms of the migration and health services crisis, often overshadow the achievements of specialists like him, who continually strive to honor Puerto Rico.

He just arrived from two symposiums in Hong Kong and Singapore as an expert speaker invitee, to discuss the latest trends in rejuvenation treatments, and oculoplastic surgery, which covers everything surrounding the eyes, including eyelids, orbital and lacrimal system.

PIONEER IN HIS PRACTICE.

As a pioneer in the use of Botox[®], produced by Allergan, his practice has become a specialized



Ophthalmologist and Oculoplastic Surgeon José Raúl Montes has a medical practice in Puerto Rico that has been internationally recognized.

center in rejuvenation treatments. This industry has not been affected by the country's economic crisis.

"My practice stands among the first fifty accounts of the southeast region of the United States in the use of Botox[®]. I was privileged to be the company's spokesperson and trainer on the island. It also granted me access to research prior and after it was approved by the FDA", added Montes.

As part of this process Montes, through his 13-staff practice, collaborates with the research and positioning of Allergan's new products in the local market which, in addition to Botox[®], carries other products for facial treatments such as fillers.

Moreover, as Sculptra[®]'s spokesman and trainer in Puerto Rico and Latin America for the multinational dermatology company Galderma, his office is among the top 10 in sales of this product in the United States.

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The expert is also a spokesperson for other products, such as Restylane® Silk [a filler for the mouth area] and Ultherapy [an ultrasound system that lifts skin without surgery]. On the latter, he was recognized among 67 centers, as a regional leader of this innovative treatment in terms of product sales and results. "Companies like Ulthera have realized the importance of Puerto Rico's position in this industry and in order to expand throughout South and Central America, they have selected this office as the training center for the region", Montes reported.

In fact, the spokesman said the Latino market has been the group that has experienced the greatest growth in the use of cosmetic procedures in the past year. He said, "It is estimated that 20% of all cosmetic procedures performed in the United States are undergone specifically by women of Latin origin".

BOOM IN TREATMENTS.

In keeping up with this trend, the local market has seen significant growth in the use of rejuvenating treatments, asserted Montes. For example, his office's billing has increased to double digits in the last year. Montes stated that in the middle of a 'full crisis' he expanded his office and invested in medical equipment at cost of over \$500,000, which allowed him to keep up with the latest trends in the industry. However, he stressed that he does not consider himself a physician who rapidly follows the trends. "I hold off until the treatment is tested and await the results before implementing it; thus, I do not consider myself an early adopter," he assured.

He asserted that there is a lot of acceptance in Puerto Rico's cosmetic surgery industry. He explained, "The main patient is 89% female and 11% male. The average age is between 50-55 years. A woman undergoing these procedures is professional and educated, with money at her disposal". According to the expert, his patients

visit the office two to four times a year. "A woman who is undergoing these procedures does it for maintenance, like going to the beauty salon or visiting a dentist twice a year", he added.



SOCIAL NETWORKS SOCIAL CONTRIBUTE.

The popularity of the publication of photos in social media, especially the so-called 'selfies' have made people more aware of their physical appearance and how they look. Thus, the physician understands that, somehow, this has also contributed to the rise in this type of treatment.

For example, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons published that, after having some 14 million treatments in the United States in 2014, non-invasive cosmetic procedures, such as Botox® and fillers, had a growth of 4%. Meanwhile cosmetic surgeries grew by only 1%, for a total of 1.7 million of medical interventions.

As a researcher and scientist, Montes himself has led studies in his practice which revealed that the level of satisfaction of patients undergoing these non-invasive treatments, in most cases, exceeds 90%, and the level of acceptance of the patient's significant partner is extremely high.

In addition, he explained that the two main reasons why they had not gone through a rejuvenation treatment before were: fear of the treatment itself or the cost. Once they see results, over 80% admitted they would go through a treatment of this nature again.

PEOPLE DO NOT SKIMP ON REJUVENATION.

"While it is true that the financial factor is an important consideration, my experience has been that even in times of economic tightness, where people have to choose where they spend their money, they prefer to cut elsewhere before missing an opportunity to undergo this type of treatment", he explained.

In general, Montes used Botox[®] as example of a treatment for the entire face that can cost about \$600. This is a very competitive price in comparison to practices of the same level of experience and reputation in a city like New York, where the cost might exceed the \$1,200.

Due to this level of competitiveness in price and reputation acquired through his years of experience, the expert said some of his clientele travel from abroad to be exclusively treated by him.

In fact, he affirmed that his best advertising comes from patients who share their experiences with their friends, and recommend his services.

EDUCATION THAT DOES NOT END.

The doctor confessed that much of his success lies in his aptitude to reinvent himself every day and manage his office like a business. To accomplish this, he continues educating himself, investigating, and trading information with colleagues from other countries to stay current and aware of the most recent trends and changes.

"I am never satisfied with the knowledge I have. I continue to educate myself because I feel that it is my personal commitment, with my patients and my country, because whenever I represent Puerto Rico in international conferences, I have to be at the level of what is expected of me", he reaffirmed.

As part of this process of studying and researching, an upcoming edition of the medical journal "Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery" will publish a research conducted by Montes on race and gender considerations of injectable treatments in patients of Latin origin.

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