
Unit Specification

UBT505 – Provide Advanced Skin Needling Treatments

D/651/6136

Level: 6

Guided Learning Hours (GLH): 80

Overview

The aim of this unit is to develop learners' knowledge, understanding and practical skills when using advanced skin needling techniques, with needles up to 1mm for the face and up to 2mm for the body. It covers the skills involved in providing a thorough consultation to establish client suitability for treatment and the knowledge on how to formulate a specific treatment plan tailored to suit individual client needs. Learners will also develop the knowledge required to provide pre and post-treatment advice and post care to ensure the client receives the full benefit of the treatment.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, learners will:

L01 Know the relevant anatomy, physiology and pathologies for advanced skin needling

L02 Understand the safety considerations when providing advanced skin needling treatments

L03 Understand how to provide advanced skin needling treatments

L04 Be able to consult, plan and prepare for advanced skin needling treatment

L05 Be able to provide advanced skin needling treatments

L06 Be able to reflect on skin needling treatments

Unit content

LO1 Know the relevant anatomy, physiology and pathologies for advanced skin needling

Structure and functions of the skin and relevance to advanced skin needling treatments

Taught content

- Epidermis – stratified epithelial tissue, stratum germinativum, stratum spinosum, stratum granulosum, stratum lucidum, stratum corneum
- Cell structure and types in the skin, mitosis, epidermal lipidity and hydration, epidermal tissue differentiation, keratinisation, natural desquamation and melanogenesis
- The defensive role of the epidermis and the importance of the natural barrier function (NBF) and implications of compromised NBF
- The role of melanocytes, keratinocytes and fibroblasts in promoting and rejuvenating healthy skin
- Melanogenesis to include Post Inflammatory Hyperpigmentation (PIH) plus causes and recognition of hypo and hyperpigmentation pigmented lesions, recognition and causes i.e. vitiligo, solar/seborrheic keratosis, actinic keratoses, lentiginos, ephelides, chloasma, melasma, Poikiloderma of Civatte, skin cancers
- Dermis – blood/lymph supply, papillary layer, reticular layer, extra cellular matrix-collagen, elastin, hyaluronic acid, dermal cells mast cells, fibroblasts macrophages and neutrophils, proteoglycans, glycosaminoglycans (GAGS)
- Extracellular matrix (ECM) development, function, degeneration and regeneration including importance of collagenase and elastase in the wound healing process
- Hair – cuticle, medulla, cortex, hair bulb, hair shaft, dermal papilla, sebaceous glands and sebum, arrector pili muscle, sweat glands (eccrine and apocrine), sensory nerve endings (Meissner's corpuscles, Pacinian corpuscles, Merkel's discs, Ruffini corpuscles). Hair growth cycles, anagen, catagen, telogen
- Hypodermis – subcutaneous layer, adipose tissue, adipocytes
- Functions of the skin – secretion, heat regulation, absorption, protection, elimination, sensation, vitamin D production, melanin production, the process of keratinisation
- Effects of the acid mantle, amino acids, natural water factor of the skin
- Basic skin types
 - Normal – fine texture, no visible pores, smooth, supple, flexible
 - Oily – shiny, slight thickening, sallow, coarse texture, enlarged pores, congestion, comedones
 - Dry – lacks moisture, dry to touch, flakiness, fine texture, thin, tight, small pores, broken capillaries, ageing
 - Combination – combination of two or more skin types, usually oily T-zone, normal or dry on cheeks

- The inflammation process including PIH
- The impact of compromised healing process and how to recognise and respond to it
- Types of collagen I, III, IV & VII
- The process of and the requirements for collagen synthesis including vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, antioxidants, growth factors, copper peptides, bioflavonoids, iron, zinc and amino acids
- Vascular lesions and common skin disorders i.e. acne rosacea, telangiectasia, cherry angioma, Campbell de Morgan spots, spider naevus, sebaceous hyperplasia and keratosis pilaris

Principles of controlled wound healing

Taught content

- The uses and implications of controlled wound healing to the practitioner
- Principles of inflammation and healing devices of the skin: basic principles of controlled wounding for aesthetic rejuvenation. Wound healing is a complex and dynamic process of restoration of skin cell structures and tissue layers
- Influential factors in the efficiency of wound healing responses
- The four principles and processes of wound healing – hemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, remodelling; actions of arachidonic acid cascade, Merkel and Langerhan cells, red and white blood cells, the clotting process, platelets, fibrin clots, types and roles of growth factors in the healing response, re-epithelialisation, reformation and building of the basement membrane, mitosis leading to epidermal regeneration, rebuilding of the extracellular matrix and early collagen; formation characteristics of type III collagen, collagen remodelling and the conversion of collagen from type III to type I. Characteristics of collagen type I
- Phases of skin healing – hemostasis instant phase, inflammatory phase (occurs immediately following the injury and lasts approximately 6 days), fibroblastic phase (occurs at the termination of the inflammatory phase and can last up to 4 weeks), scar maturation phase (begins at the 4th week and can last for years)
- Factors which interfere with wound healing/trauma – initial or repetitive, scalds and burns (both physical and chemical), animal bites or insect stings, pressure, vascular compromise, arterial, venous or mixed, immunodeficiency, malignancy, connective tissue disorders, nutritional deficiencies, psychosocial disorders, adverse effects of medications

Structure and functions of the circulatory and lymphatic systems and relevance to advanced skin needling treatments

Taught content

- Circulatory system
 - Functions of blood – transport, regulation, protection, clotting
 - The structure of veins, venules and capillaries
 - The structure of arteries, arterioles and capillaries
 - Main arteries of the face and head
- Common carotid, external carotid, occipital, facial, maxillary, lingual, superficial temporal, thyroid
 - Main veins of the face and head
- External jugular, internal jugular, common facial, anterior facial, maxillary, superficial temporal
 - Arteries – internal and external carotid, occipital, temporal, facial
 - Veins – internal and external jugular, occipital, temporal, subclavian
 - Blood composition – erythrocytes, leucocytes, thrombocytes, plasma
 - Circulation – heart, pulmonary circulation, capillaries, systemic circulation
 - The process of blood clotting – platelets, thromboplastin, prothrombin, thrombin, fibrinogen, fibrin, calcium
- Lymphatic system
 - Functions of the lymphatic system – fluid distribution, fighting infection, transport of fat and nutrition
 - Functions of lymph nodes – filter toxins, clean lymphatic fluid, produce antibodies and antitoxins, produce lymphocytes
 - Position of lymph nodes – occipital, mastoid, superficial cervical, deep cervical, parotid, buccal, submental, submandibular
- The relevance of the lymphatic and circulatory systems to skin needling treatments

Principles and functions of the endocrine system and relevance to advanced skin needling treatments

Taught content

- The endocrine system and its effect on the skin/body conditions which may affect the client receiving advanced skin needling treatment
- Pituitary – Oxytocin, Antidiuretic Hormone (ADH) (Vasopressin), Prolactin, Human Growth Hormone (HGH), Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH), Adrenocorticotrophic Hormone (ACTH), Luteinising Hormone (LH), Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH), Melanin Stimulating Hormone (MSH)
- Thyroid gland – Thyroxin, Triiodothyronine, Calcitonin, Parathyroid glands, Parathormone, Thymus, T lymphocytes
- Pineal – Regulates the pituitary and releases serotonin
- Islets of Langerhans – Insulin
- Adrenal glands
- Adrenal medulla – Adrenalin, Noradrenalin
- Adrenal cortex – Corticosteroids, Mineralocorticoids – Aldosterone, Glucocorticoids
- Ovaries – Oestrogen, Progesterone
- Testes – Testosterone
- Cortisol levels – Stress, puberty, pregnancy, menopause
- Effects of hormones on the skin – Melanin Stimulating Hormone (MSH), Testosterone, Oestrogen, Thyroxin
- The relevance of the endocrine system to advanced skin needling treatments

Associated pathologies and relevant terminology of the skin

Taught content

- Allergic reaction, bruise, benign, bulla, crust, erythema, excoriation, fissures, haemangioma, hyperaemia, inflammation, keloid, macule, malignant, papule, pustule, nodule or cyst, oedema, scales, scar, tumour, ulcer, vesicle, weal, weeping, chilblains, couperose, telangiectasia, comedones, crow's feet, hyperkeratosis, milia, pseudo folliculitis, urticaria, hyperpigmentation, hypopigmentation, atopic eczema, atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, acne vulgaris, acne rosacea, boils, carbuncles, folliculitis, impetigo, herpes simplex, herpes zoster, warts, verrucae, candida, tinea corporis, albinism, chloasma, dermatosis papulosa nigra, ephelides, lentigo, leucoderma, naevae, papilloma, port wine stain (capillary naevus), vitiligo, sebaceous cysts (steatoma), skin tags (fibroma, verrucae filiformis), spider naevi, styes, xanthomas and prickly heat (miliaria rubra)

Associated pathologies of the circulatory system

Taught content

- Anaemia, aneurism, arteriosclerosis, AIDS/HIV, coronary thrombosis, haemophilia, hypertension, hypotension, high cholesterol, hepatitis A, B and C, leukaemia, phlebitis, septicaemia, stress, thrombosis, varicose veins, cardiac failure, epistaxis (nosebleeds), heart disease, hole in the heart, myocardial infarction, palpitations, pulmonary embolism, Raynaud's disease, sickle cell anaemia, thalassaemia and varicose ulcers

Associated pathologies of the lymphatic system

Taught content

- Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Hashimoto's thyroiditis and lymphoma

Associated pathologies of the endocrine system

Taught content

- Thyrotoxicosis, myxoedema, goitre, Addison's syndrome, Cushing's syndrome, diabetes mellitus and diabetes insipidus

LO2 Understand the safety considerations when providing advanced skin needling treatments

Safety considerations of product and equipment sourcing

Taught content

- Ensure advanced skin needling equipment used is approved by EU Cosmetics Regulations for cosmetic use by practitioners and conforms to guidelines of the Cosmetic Practice Standards Authority (CPSA) or the relevant regulatory body in the respective country
- Understand how to gain verification of legality
- Purchase from reputable sources (avoidance of counterfeit devices)
- Ensure products used are those approved by EU Cosmetics Regulations for cosmetic use by practitioner
- Ensure products are suitable for direct skin absorption via skin needling
- Check with supplier/manufacturer for guidelines

Insurance requirement guidelines

Taught content

- Insurance policy requirements to be met to ensure insurance is valid
- Requirements for skin testing prior to treatment
- Acquiring informed client consent and signature before every treatment
- Providing written post-care information
- Ensuring the practitioner is working within scope of practice with regards to size of needles used on face and body

Hygiene considerations

Taught content

- Set up and work within a sterile field. Use of suitable sterilisation and sanitisation for equipment and surfaces. Use of single use items as appropriate such as sterile disposable gloves (latex free), disposable hair protectors, applicators, cotton wool, couch roll, clean laundered towels and practitioner's protective face mask
- General hygiene – i.e. washing of hands before and after treatment, hand gel, clean towels, use of disposables where possible
- Disinfectant or sterilisation – use of heat or chemical methods, bactericides, fungicides, UV cabinet for storage, use of sterile dressing packs
- Equipment – only used for intended purpose, safe usage/safe handling/storage/visual checks, correct disposal of contaminated equipment and waste products
- Disposable single use covers/barrier film for handpiece, for example, needle pieces renewed for each client, wires on automated devices covered with sterile protective covers renewed for each client

Hygiene and infection control

Taught content

- Knowledge of infection control, bacteria, virus, fungi, parasites, prevention of cross-contamination and disease transmission procedures, levels of infection control, personal immunisation (Hepatitis B), single use barrier consumables for protection against Blood Borne Viruses (BBV) and Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

Features, benefits and use of treatment products

Taught content

- Know the ethical methods of sourcing, purchasing and storing regulated treatment products including expiration dates
- The need to have knowledge and understanding about treatment products including the features and benefits
- The safety and legal reasons for using products that are licensed and meet EU standards and the outcome of using products which are not properly tested or contain banned substances
- The use of Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) in relation to skin needling treatments

Associated hazards and risks

Taught content

- The principles of risk assessment and management; identify hazards, assess the risks, control the risks, record findings, review controls
- Hazards and risks identification through risk assessment
- Putting procedures in place to ensure risks are minimised
- Proper training for all staff
- Protocols to follow during consultation
- Written and verbal post-care for client after each procedure outlining client responsibilities and recommended aftercare and homecare instructions
- Risk according to coagulation status:
 - Consider stopping self-medicated anticoagulant medication and supplements (garlic tablets, omega-3 capsules) 5-7 days or 7-10 days prior to needling
 - Discuss holding any prescribed medication with the prescribing practitioner or GP
 - Only consider microneedling despite aspirin medication, if client accepts increased bleeding risk (must document counselling and consent of client in client record)
- Risk according to skin quality:
 - Caution is advised with psoriasis or skin disease
 - Caution is advised, and skin preparation may be necessary with darker skin types (Fitzpatrick skin type 3 or higher)
- Avoidance of needle stick injuries, implications of blood borne diseases, redness, swelling, weeping skin, milia, hyperpigmentation, cold sores, acne outbreak, bacterial infection and scarring
- The use of topical mesotherapy actives cannot currently be recommended
 - Products designed for topical use only, should not be used prior to/during micro needling (for example, as a glide medium) without first being removed
 - If products are selected for use prior to/during microneedling, with a view to enhanced penetration, they must be licensed for injectable use for example, mesotherapy
- Risk to practitioner – Personal protective equipment must be provided free of charge and used – Immunisation history as per overarching principles; up to date Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for practitioners. Needlestick injuries – Blood borne virus risk. Needlestick injuries should be managed according to national guidelines. Needlestick injury policy must be in place to safeguard client and practitioner

Importance of following supplier's and manufacturer's instructions for safe use

Taught content

- Understand and know reasons for supplier and manufacturer products and protocols for advanced skin needling treatments including test patch recommendations. Products appropriate for use during advanced skin needling treatment preparation, performance, post care and aftercare application according to manufacturers' instructions, for example, cleanser, serums, SPF. Follow guidelines to check expiry dates and select new unused needling roller or automated device with disposable, single use needle cartridge considering needle diameter and depth (as appropriate)
- Prepare, open, load and dispose of equipment following supplier and manufacturer protocols and adhering with compliance
- Follow supplier/manufacturer protocols for hygiene, sterilisation and treatment application – working over the small zones of the face/body in specified order, using the correct pressure and techniques, adapting treatment to all areas. Observation of desirable and undesirable clinical endpoints, cooling and skin recovery products used in the salon. Frequency of treatment, course of treatments, conditions to treat

Treatment age restrictions

Taught content

- The age at which an individual is classed as a minor and how this may differ internationally
- Why treatment should only be provided for adult clients 18 and over

Timing of treatments

Taught content

- Identify and understand commercial timings for treatments. Recognise variations in timings depending on type of and size of needles used, skin health/type and condition to be treated plus other contributory factors
- Approximate timings for guidance:
 - 45 minutes smaller areas body i.e. scar
 - 60 minutes larger body areas i.e. abdomen stretch marks
 - 60 minutes face
 - 75 minutes face and neck
 - 45 minutes chest

Contra-indications that would prevent or restrict treatment

Taught content

- Prevent – allergy to surgical grade stainless steel, anti-coagulant medications, blood borne diseases, contagious skin diseases, extremely sensitive skin, haemophilia, history of drugs with photosensitising potential, inflammations and swellings, isotretinoin, open wounds, recent scar tissue, keloid scarring, rosacea, severe active acne, skin cancer and undiagnosed lumps
- Restrict – abrasions, active inflammatory dermatoses (i.e. psoriasis), anxiety, bruises, current medications, cuts, diabetes, epilation, epilepsy, herpes simplex, history of scarring, hypertrophic scarring, Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) or laser in the treatment area, large moles, long term anti-inflammatory use, piercings, poor mental and emotional state, prior cosmetic surgery, recent botulinum toxin injections or dermal fillers, recent dermabrasion or cosmetic skin peels, sensitive or excessively reactive skin types, supplements and herbal remedies, recent UV exposure and varicose veins
- Consenting for skin needling – client-related cautions – The use of skin needling is not recommended during pregnancy or breastfeeding. Caution is advised for clients with anticipated wound healing problems, including Diabetes types 1 and 2, steroids, smoking, immunosuppression/immune modulators

Contra indications requiring medical referral

Taught content

- Contra-indications requiring medical referral – acne scarring, undiagnosed stretch marks, stretch marks related to an underlying health condition and, hormone related stretch marks

Referring contra-indicated clients

Taught content

- Actions to take in relation to specific contra-indications when referring clients
- Knowledge of organisation protocol for not naming specific suspected contra-indications when encouraging clients to seek medical advice
- Encourage clients to seek medical advice without alarm or concern
- Reasons for not diagnosing suspected contra-indications due to professional status, acknowledging the need for medical training to be able to diagnose

When to consult with other aesthetic professionals

Taught content

- Situations requiring additional information from other professionals involved with the client and methods to obtain this information in compliance with confidentiality and consent guidance, in line with current data protection legislation
- Awareness of when and how to request additional advice from other clinicians treating the client, in line with current data protection legislation
- Alternative procedure options when skin needling is not appropriate or contra-indicated, such as dermaplaning, microdermabrasion, mesotherapy, IPL, microneedling, HIFU, radiofrequency, ultrasound, and electroporation, depending on the condition being treated

LO3 Understand how to provide advanced skin needling treatments

Requirements for treatment planning

Taught content

- Identify client needs, expectations, anticipated costs, and treatment objectives. Agree realistic outcomes against client expectations, expected treatment sensations, discuss pain and pain management and potential risks relevant to advanced skin needling device to be used
- Contra-indications that prevent or restrict treatment or require medical referral
- Identification and discussion of skin type including Fitzpatrick skin type and skin conditions present and individual lesions or concerns to assist in choice of the appropriate treatment and to identify realistic treatment outcomes
- Frequency, duration and potential cost of treatments recommended to achieve treatment outcomes
- Pre and post-treatment advice including possible contra-actions, healing process, recommended skin care/post-care and lifestyle advice or restrictions to ensure client is suitable for treatment
- Treatment plan should be clearly agreed between the client and practitioner and recorded on the consultation documentation with signed consent

Factors to consider when treatment planning

Taught content

- Previous skin treatment in salon – details of type of treatment, how frequent, dates the treatments were received, to ensure enough time has passed for internal trauma to have healed
- Satisfaction and results. Dissatisfaction could indicate body dysmorphia or client with unrealistic expectations
- Legal aspects of responsibility of the practitioner
- Site, age and reasons for scarring – burns, surgery, accidents, insect bites, acne, chicken pox. Type of scarring – hypertrophic/keloid, atrophic, ice pick, boxcar and rolling scars. Assess depth, suitability for treatment, realistic proposed improvement of scar tissue
- Results from skin tests and skin analysis classification and characteristics, including skin type and skin density (Fitzpatrick skin type, Glogau photo damage, Lancer scale, phenotype and genotype, chronological skin ageing process, intrinsic and extrinsic factors), skin conditions or lesions present, and specific areas of concern to assist in choosing the appropriate procedure and identifying realistic and achievable outcomes
- Use of current skin care products including SPF, AHA's, BHA's, Retinoids or Vitamin A derivatives, high concentration of Vitamin C
- Photo damage – sun exposure history and use of SPF will indicate level of photo damage present – use of skin diagnostic equipment
- The importance of acknowledging when underlying factors will affect the success of the procedure and selecting variables to suit different skin classifications and skin types
- Diet and lifestyle factors that could reduce the effects of treatment
- Client's medical history, emotional and physical condition, previous treatments to improve skin appearance, previous treatments in the area to be treated, sun exposure and tanning history, fake tan application, skin classification, and skin condition to assist in choosing the appropriate procedure and identifying realistic and achievable treatment outcomes

- Previous skin/body salon treatments, details of type of treatment, frequency, and dates the treatments were received, to ensure enough time has passed for skin needling to be appropriate and to gain insight into the client's approach to aesthetic treatments
- Satisfaction and results. Red flags for Body Dysmorphia Disorder (BDD) and clients with unrealistic expectations. Protocols for managing these situations

Assessing skin characteristics

Taught content

- Assessment and observation of skin during consultation, importance of using skin diagnostic equipment, such as Woods Lamp, light magnifier/glasses, skin scanner/diagnosis technology
- How to assess and recognise skin health characteristics – Fitzpatrick scale 1-4, level of sensitivity, thickness of skin, epidermal thickness, healing capacity
- Recognition and understanding of skin analysis – surface hydration levels, pigmentation, photo/sun damage, vascular lesions, primary and secondary lesions, irregularities, skin texture (pore size), skin laxity, static and dynamic wrinkles, congestion/excessive oil, sensitivity
- How to match the treatment to suit skin health characteristics, the Fitzpatrick classification scale and treatment objectives
- Consequences of inaccurate identification of client's skin type, classifications and the different side effect profiles for each skin type, skin density, colour and appropriate skin needling to use
- Reasons for choosing different advanced skin needling device, needle diameter and techniques to suit the variations in sensitivity, thickness of epidermis and dermis, area being treated, Fitzpatrick classification of the skin and treatment objectives

Treatment advice and information to be provided to the client pre-treatment, during and post-treatment

Taught content

- Provide consultation at least 48 hours prior to actual treatment to discuss outcomes and pre-treatment preparation. Active skin care of a high/professional strength concentration needs to be avoided for 3-5 days such as retinoids and AHA's pre and post skin needling treatments. Low strength should be avoided for 48 hours post-treatment. Post-treatment skincare products must be used for 3 days post-treatment
- Use 2-4 weeks skin preparation programme at home to improve hydration, skin cell health and general texture/condition of the skin. To improve healing capacity and tolerance of advanced skin needling treatment
- All skin preparation is subject to manufacturers guidelines – always check prior to treatment
- Pre-treatment, clients should also be advised to avoid UV exposure for a minimum of 24hrs and heat immediately prior to treatment, wear SPF minimum 30 and UVA broad spectrum protection daily
- Physical sensation
- The client may feel sensitivity particularly around the eyes – feels like skin is being rubbed with fine sandpaper
- Post-treatment physical sensation

- Day 1 – erythema and redness like moderate sunburn with minor swelling, some pinpoint bleeding
- Day 2 – erythema and mild swelling often starts to subside
- Day 3 – as day 2 and skin appears pink
- Day 1-3 – skin will feel dry and tight, moderate flaking can take place
- All physical sensations and effects post-treatment do depend on size of device used, technique and individual skin characteristics
- Possible contra-actions – what they are, why they appear and how long they may last – bruising, histamine reaction, irritation, localised allergic reaction, signs of infection, urticaria

Pain threshold and sensitivity variations

Taught content

- Understanding the inflammatory response of the skin and the effects and associated risks of using over the counter (OTC) pain relief, such as Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), and the possible affect they may have on treatment and the healing process
- Recognising skin health/types and areas of the face that are more sensitive, fragile and reactive to topical applications. Those that have more prominent and dilated dermal blood vessels which may contribute to an exaggerated inflammatory response or hyperpigmentation (Fitzpatrick 4 +) plus a more intense physical sensation when the treatment is applied
- Understanding that treatments for clients may be more uncomfortable during menstruation or ovulation

Requirements for skin sensitivity testing prior to treatment

Taught content

- Skin test performed during initial consultation after client has agreed and signed informed consent. Client must sign patch test form if separate from main consultation form
- Testing for potential allergic reaction or adverse response (inflammatory response) to advanced skin needling products. Clients with history of allergies or sensitivities have an increased risk of allergic reaction. Skin test site is located discreetly near the treatment area – behind the ear or inner side of forearm. Skin is prepared as usual for advanced skin needling treatment. Desired advanced skin needling to be applied as appropriate (following supplier instructions). Evaluation of the skin test is made following timing recommended by supplier's instructions. Recording of results to include whether the client can tell the difference in sensations. Record date, location of test, and products used, description of results, if the client is unable to identify the correct sensations a full description of response and product used. Advanced skin needling to be performed when the client is able to correctly identify different thermal and tactile sensations
- Any change of advanced skin needling product or strength to be tested prior to use
- Follow supplier/manufacturer instructions for recommended time between skin test and advanced skin needling application for each skin type and condition as they may vary

Pre-treatment preparatory skin care programmes

Taught content

- Pre-treatment advice and preparatory topical skin care programmes that should be given to clients to optimize results and why this needs to be relevant to their skin type and Fitzpatrick skin type
- Benefits – improved cell health and function, increased desquamation, skin will heal at a faster rate, skin will be more tolerant of injury
- Topical skin care products, for example, vitamins, antioxidants, UV protection, AHA and BHA skin care programmes prior to treatment
- Topical ingredients/products for all skin conditions and Fitzpatrick skin types to improve skin health and condition and minimise side effects after advanced skin needling treatments –post-inflammatory pigmentation common in Fitzpatrick 4 (and above) – types – use tyrosinase inhibitors
- Positive effects of advanced skin needling healthy skin in comparison to a compromised skin condition
- All products must be relevant to skin health/type/condition and Fitzpatrick skin type

Cleansing the skin prior to treatment

Taught content

- Reasons:
 - to remove all make-up, oils and debris ensuring a clean surface is worked upon
 - to reduce the risk of infection
- Typical products used:
 - cleansers, toners and preparatory skin products

Types and purpose of advanced skin needling products

Taught content

- Roller – sterile, single use – sizes of needle, depth and penetration, skin trauma caused and effects of varying lengths, where to use on the face/body
- Manual stamp, roller and automated pen with single use disposable cartridges – sizes of needle, depth and penetration, skin trauma caused and effects of varying lengths, where to use on the face/body
- Differentiate between 3 devices, advantages, disadvantages
- Single use formulations for trans epidermal penetration during treatment and post-treatment – peptides, enzymes, vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, hyaluronic acid, hydroxy acids, anti-inflammatory sebostatic agents and tyrosinase inhibitors

Preparation of equipment and products for treatment

Taught content

- Understanding how to set up and work within a sterile field, how to prepare equipment on clean trolley in an ergonomic manner to prevent strain to the practitioner and to assist in the smooth application of treatment, for example, safety, time management, hygiene, organisation and professionalism
- Why it is necessary to select appropriate products and equipment before start of each treatment and place on trolley, checking appropriate products and equipment are being used for treatment
- Topical anaesthetic use for microneedling
 - Medicines must be managed as per overarching principles
 - If stocking medications these must be appropriately audited, managed, prescribed and dispensed as per the overarching principles
- There must be a named person accountable for the management of medications
 - A prescription is required when exceeding 'over the counter' doses.
 - Maximum dose must not be exceeded
 - Topical anaesthetics must be used as per manufacturers' instructions
 - Once opened, use within the time specified by the manufacturer
 - Anaesthetic must be dispensed onto sterile surface, otherwise disposed of after single use
 - Local anaesthetic must be wiped from the skin before using microneedle device
- Understanding why appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is prepared and used:
 - Equipment for microneedling – disposable headbands, disposable dressing packs, disposable gloves, sterile gauze pack, antiseptic skin preparation, for example, chlorhexidine solution, sterile microneedling device (single use manual roller or needle cartridge for power-assisted device). Where a power-assisted skin-needling device is being used, the needle cartridge must contain a backflow mechanism to prevent fluid being passed into the hand piece, eye protection for clinician, gauze resuscitation equipment, as per the overarching principles

Selection of advanced skin needling products and equipment

Taught content

- Selection and use of device, needle depth, duration and intensity and technique of application according to;
 - Up to 1.5mm for face
 - Up to 2mm for body
 - Level 4 training is recommended for up to 0.5mm on the face and 1mm on the body
 - Level 5 training is recommended for up to 1mm on the face and 1.5mm on the body
 - Level 6 training is recommended for up to 1.5mm on the face, 2mm on the body
- Treatment objectives – reduction of fine lines, improvement of skin conditions, skin texture and skin laxity
- Skin characteristics – adaptations for Fitzpatrick scale, level of sensitivity, thickness of skin, epidermal thickness
- Areas to be treated – face, neck, chest, back of hands, arms, legs, abdomen

Method of application

Taught content

- How to work systematically and methodically, avoiding excess treatment overlap across the areas to be treated
 - Plan application start and endpoint
 - Reason for multi-directional application sequence protocol
 - Reasons for systematic and methodical application
 - Reasons for adequate skin support in treatment area to avoid skin distension, tearing, bruising, and over treatment
- Problems associated with uneven treatments, overlapping and post-procedural marking to the skin (tracking)

Adaptations to treatment

Taught content

- How to adapt the treatment to take into account pre-existing conditions
 - Adapt application by omitting treatment to pre-existing lesions i.e. skin tags, moles
- Why it is necessary to adapt pressure, duration and the number of passes for different areas of the body and client sensitivity
 - Different skin (epidermal and dermal) depths and sensitivity, different treatment objectives, treating different skin characteristics of varying structure and depth, different healing capacity, different Fitzpatrick skin types
- Treatment progression and additional/complementary treatments

Areas to avoid

Taught content

- Avoid treatment over the eyelids, inside the orbital bone area, also on the palms of hands and soles of feet, pustular lesions, moles and skin tags

Use and limitations of advanced skin needling products and equipment

Taught content

- Used to reduce fine lines, improve skin condition, improve skin texture, improve skin laxity, improve the appearance of stretch marks
- Cannot remove deep wrinkles or scars
- Limitations of products and equipment used for advanced skin needling treatments
- Products used in conjunction with pre, during, after and post-treatment
- Single use formulations for trans epidermal penetration during treatment and post-treatment, for example, peptides, enzymes, vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, hyaluronic acid, hydroxy acids, anti-inflammatory sebostatic agents, tyrosinase inhibitors
- Availability of rollers/automated devices not produced to EU regulations and compliance (not CE marked), poor quality steel, ineffective sterilisation and blunt needles
- Treatment
 - PPE (non-latex gloves) must be sterile, single use only
 - Single use sealed items have expiry date that they must be used by
 - Rollers
 - Opened for each treatment so they are sterile and single use only
 - Need to use more than one roller to vary size of needles used on one area, this adds to costs, automated devices can vary needle depth using same disposable unit
 - Large item to dispose of for every treatment, automated pen has a disposable unit/cartridge which is smaller to dispose of
 - All devices require clinical biohazard waste sharps box for disposable
 - Swabs and disposables from treatments require clinical biohazard waste disposal
- Use of disposable film/sleeve where recommended to cover handpiece and wires of automated device, hand piece is not single use, working within a sterile field

Benefits and effects of advanced skin needling treatment

Taught content

- Benefits/effects – Physical
 - Stimulate neocollagenesis (new collagen production) and neovascularisation (formation of functional microvascular networks) due to the result of growth factors being released following needling through the stratum corneum into the lower layers of the skin
 - Understand release of growth factors as part of the wound healing mechanism due to advanced skin needling
 - Understand stages of wound healing
 - Wound, haemostasis
 - Inflammation
 - Proliferation
 - Remodelling – maturation
- Visible effects
 - Improvement in fine wrinkles
 - Reduce acne scarring – becomes less obvious and skin smoother
 - Diminish stretch marks
 - Tighten skin as skin laxity is corrected
 - Improvement in appearance of scars
 - Refinement of skin pores
 - Evening out of skin tone and colour
- Reduction in some hyperpigmentation

Effects and risks associated with the treatment

Taught content

- Effects and risks of using excess pressure, uneven application or non-compliance to safety and hygiene practices
 - Post procedural marking – tracking
 - Bruising, infection, excessive bleeding, erythema and oedema, slow healing, scarring
- Bleeding, increased with anti-coagulant medication or supplementation – The formation of granulomas and fibrous tissue with deeper needling
- Keloid scarring, Post Inflammatory Hyperpigmentation (PIH), infection, particularly in immunosuppressed or diabetic clients, allergic reactions and toxicity to local anaesthetic, dissatisfaction/inadequate result

Contra-actions which may occur

Taught content

- How to deal with them, what advice to give clients and when to refer to a medical practitioner
- Bruising, irritation, localised allergic reaction, histamine reaction, urticaria, signs of infection

Pre and post-treatment products

Taught content

- Understand the types of pre and post-treatment products available and why they are necessary
- Vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, antioxidants, growth factors, peptides, copper peptides, bioflavonoids, iron, zinc and amino acids and their effects and importance in the role on collagen synthesis

Benefits and use of inhibitors

Taught content

- Understand melanogenesis and the enzyme tyrosinase, where it is located and its function
- Understand how tyrosinase inhibitors can reduce the production of melanin and how this can protect against Post Inflammatory Hyperpigmentation (PIH)
- Knowledge of tyrosinase inhibitors and melanin suppressors, for example, azelaic acid, bearberry, liquorice root extract, ascorbic acid, kojic acid, niacinamide, L-arbutin, hydroquinone

The use of SPF and UVA specific sun protection products

Taught content

- Why it is necessary to use a minimum of a UVB SPF 30 and UVA specific sun protector post-treatment
- Knowledge of SPF rating system and why high % of block is required to protect the skin after advanced skin needling
 - SPF 15 = 93% UVB block
 - SPF 30 = 97% UVB block
 - SPF 50 = 98% UVB block
- Knowledge of UVA specific sun protector rating – star rating and the difference between physical and chemical sun cream

Prevent infection and promote healing

Taught content

- Understand the products necessary to prevent infection and promote healing, how they should be used before and after advanced skin needling treatments. Saline solution or chlorhexidine solution applied on sterile cotton pad or gauze and the use of sterile dressing packs to provide a sterile field
- To promote healing – calming products post-treatment – anti-inflammatory effects

Treatment progression and additional/complementary treatments recommendations

Taught content

- Recommendations for frequency of treatment depending on condition treated and treatment objectives, changes to needle depth and techniques as treatment progresses, appropriate homecare advice given
- Complementary products to be used in conjunction – topical trans-epidermal products
- Knowledge of progressive remedial treatments and products as appropriate for the skin health/condition/type to promote healing and give protection
- Fitzpatrick skin classification and knowledge of how the skin benefits and responds to advanced skin needling. Knowledge of maintenance treatment timings and use of skin care programmes at home to reinforce treatment effects
- Lifestyle factors and changes that may be required to improve effectiveness of treatment – skin care routine, healthy eating, exercise and sun protection

LO4 Be able to consult, plan and prepare for advanced skin needling treatment

Use consultation techniques to determine the client's treatment plan

Taught content

- Determine that the person requesting treatment understands you and does not appear to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other illicit substances
- Consult with client, face-to-face, implementing a range of appropriate communication skills to identify indications and the client's treatment objectives, expectations and desired outcomes with associated timescales to ensure a realistic and achievable treatment plan is agreed
- Use visual aids, illustrative diagrams and images to assist client understanding of the clinical outcomes expected from advanced skin needling procedures and give clear and appropriate advice and recommendations to the client to determine and agree the final treatment plan including associated timeframes to see best possible results
- Explain rationale for chosen treatment with reference to skin assessment, desired outcomes, needle depth and actions
- All information from the consultation to be documented in the presence of the client – electronically/digitally/paper-based, at the beginning of every procedure
- Obtain the client's agreement and signed informed consent to treatment and all required visual media records prior to all procedures
- The use of skin-needling is not recommended during pregnancy or breastfeeding; Caution is advised for clients with anticipated wound healing problems, including Diabetes types 1 and 2, steroids, smoking, immunosuppression/immune modulators
- The practitioner and client must understand the implications of informed client consent, what is being agreed and the responsibility of each in terms of liability

Identify the client's medical history, indications for and aims of treatment

Taught content

- General information
- Relevant medical history – discuss all areas on consultation documentation including any recent herpes simplex, certain medications including anti-coagulants
- Lifestyle information – smoking, diet, water intake, current skin care routine that may need to be considered, sun exposure, hobbies
- Skin classification – assess Fitzpatrick scale, Lancer Scale, phenotype and genotype and Glogau photo damage, hereditary and ethnic influences, visible skin lesions; open and closed comedones, milia, papules, pustules, acne, nodules, cysts, melasma, hyper and hypopigmentation, Post Inflammatory Hyperpigmentation (PIH), Poikiloderma of Civatte, skin sensitivity, vascularity, facial erythema, acne rosacea, telangiectasia, spider naevi, skin healing ability, scars, stretchmarks, hypertrophic or keloid formation deficiencies, psychosocial disorders, adverse effects of medications
- Skin sensitivity (vascular) – facial erythema, acne rosacea, telangiectasia, spider naevi
- Skin healing history – keloid formation, scars

Explain the cooling off period

Taught content

- Provide information to the client regarding the 'cooling off' period and offer this facility between initial consultation and first treatment. Book first treatment in line with given directives on cooling off periods. Give client verbal and written information regarding the associated risks, aftereffects, possible contra or adverse reactions including any downtime, homecare/additional routines or modifications to current routines required, proposed outcomes and agreed treatment plans with appropriate time scales needed to achieve proposed desired outcome

Establish the condition of the skin

Taught content

- Perform advanced skin analysis and visual assessment of the condition and health of the skin, documenting all findings
- Skin characteristics – Skin types, Fitzpatrick scale 1-6, density/thickness of skin, epidermal thickness, healing capacity, hereditary/ethnic influences
- Skin type, skin conditions, surface hydration, hyper/hypopigmentation, photo/sun damage, vascular lesions, primary and secondary lesions, textural irregularities or keloid scarring, skin texture (pore size), skin laxity, static and dynamic wrinkles, congestion/excessive oil, overall skin health and suitability for treatment
- Identify contra-indications that may restrict, prevent or require medical referral
- Recognise common lesions requiring further assessment and know when and how to refer, using supervisor as required

Explain the treatment procedures

Taught content

Treatment procedure to include:

- Explain the positioning required for treatment
- Advanced skin needling devices are selected to match treatment objectives
- For utmost hygiene they will be single use products, opened in front of the client after the skin is cleansed, needle condition is checked plus expiry date and put ready for use
- Automated devices that require electrical power are connected to the power socket and where possible, the cartridge can be loaded but not opened
- Use of sterile dressing packs, saline and chlorhexidine solution and prepare a sterile field
- The practitioner will wear PPE – clean, disposable, non-latex sterile gloves
- The area will be cleansed thoroughly with appropriate cleanser until all make-up, debris, oils are removed, and cotton pads appear clean
- The skin is allowed to air dry
- Pre-treatment photograph to be taken
- Product/serum, as appropriate, is applied to the skin to help movement of the device and helps with hydration of the skin during treatment
- The appropriate advanced skin needling device is then taken from its sealed packet/cartridge – the needle condition checked

- For automated devices, the sealed pouch/plastic cover is open at this point and the needle condition checked test movement to ensure needle barrel moves freely
- Roller devices will have been selected according to their needle size, automated devices will require setting to select the needle size to be used, motor speed may also be selected depending on the device being used
- Once set up, inform the client where the treatment begins (depends on area being treated)
- The area will be treated in small zones in a multi directional application
- The area may be treated several times (depends on area and techniques), product may be applied at certain stages in the treatment. Clients will be required to give verbal feedback throughout the treatment using the 1-10 pain threshold scale, there are areas it may feel a little more sensitive
- Visual monitoring of the skin is always carried out continuously by the practitioner
- After treatment, calming and nourishing products will be applied to the skin
- Post-treatment photograph to be taken
- Broad band sun protection UVB and UVA is finally applied to protect the skin, explain the use of physical sun protection
- The skin will feel warm to hot similar to mild sunburn. It will appear slightly red (variations depend on area treated, techniques and needle depth used)
- Post-treatment physical sensation
 - Day 1 – erythema and redness like moderate sunburn with minor swelling, some pinpoint bleeding
 - Day 2 – erythema and mild swelling often starts to subside
 - Day 3 – as day 2 and skin appears pink
 - Day 1-3 – skin will feel dry and tight, moderate flaking can take place
- Potential risks/side effects/adverse effects
 - Bruising, irritation, localised allergic reaction, histamine reaction, urticaria, signs of infection
- Aftercare and homecare advice including the revision of skincare regime for the area between appointments if applicable and advice regarding lifestyle changes needed to support and promote healing
- Supervision arrangements to manage adverse incidents
- Access to a 24/7 emergency contact number, ideally the practitioner, if practitioner is unavailable access should be given to a deputising practitioner
- Treatment to be applied following manufacturer protocols

Select a preparatory skin care programme

Taught content

- Identify products to use 2-4 weeks prior to advanced skin needling treatments as part of a skin priming programme at home, appropriate to skin health to improve healing capacity and tolerance of advanced skin needling treatment
- Additional benefits could include:
 - Improve hydration, skin cell health and general texture/condition of the skin
- As part of this skin programme the client should also be asked to wear SPF minimum 30 and UVA broad spectrum protection daily
- Outline frequency and how products are used, quantity and order of application.
- Explain reasons for use and how regimes enhance the application and overall effects of the procedure
- Explain key ingredients used and their claimed effects for example, antioxidants, peptides, AHAs, vitamin A, B, C and E, tyrosinase inhibitors
- Always follow supplier/manufacturer recommendations in line with needling procedure to be used

Take pre-treatment visual media records

Taught content

- Following organisation procedures, industry guidelines and current data protection legislation, ensuring protocols are followed for taking clinical photographs to ensure clarity and consistency. Take photographs in same position as post-treatment photographs and where possible in the same light. Position area to be treated so photographs are taken straight on and from both sides where applicable, zoom in on areas of concern, for example, pigmentations.
- Personal devices should not be used to take images of clients
- Gain written/signed client consent for photography and storage of clinical photographs and specific use of photographs for marketing and teaching purposes

Carry out skin sensitivity tests

Taught content

- Carry out sensitivity tests in accordance with supplier/manufacturer guidelines and organisational requirements
- Thermal and tactile tests, check patch test result
- Client must sign skin sensitivity/thermal/tactile/test patch forms if separate to main consent form

Select suitable equipment and products

Taught content

- Select suitable equipment and products according to treatment objectives. Choose the correct equipment and products suitable to treat conditions/skin type identified in the agreed treatment plan

Finalise and agree the treatment plan

Taught content

- Finalise and agree the treatment plan, addressing client needs, expectations (both realistic and unrealistic) and treatment objectives using information from the initial consultation and visual skin assessment, decline treatment where applicable

Obtain signed, informed consent

Taught content

- Ensure all documents are signed after treatment plan agreed. The practitioner and client must understand the implications of informed client consent and what is being agreed
- Inform client of specific risks for needling
 - Bleeding, increased with anti-coagulant medication or supplementation
 - The formation of granulomas and fibrous tissue with deeper needling
 - Keloid scarring
 - Post inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH)
 - Infection, particularly in immunosuppressed or diabetic clients
 - Allergic reactions and toxicity to local anaesthetic
 - Dissatisfaction/inadequate result
- All information from consultation to be written on consultation documents in front of the client at the beginning of every treatment
- Informed client consent to be obtained before every practical treatment, from the client prior to carrying out any subsequent treatments

Select appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Taught content

- Use of PPE; disposable gloves non-latex, that fit the individual correctly so as not to interfere with work, worn correctly each time, used and disposed of after each use, disposable apron and mask where appropriate, disposable head bands
- Suitable protective eyewear
- All PPE stored correctly, checked and maintained so fit for purpose

LO5 Be able to provide advanced skin needling treatments

Maintain own responsibilities for health and safety through the treatment

Taught content

- Ensure working area is set up and a safe working environment created in line with health and safety protocols and legislation. Sterile field to be prepared and PPE to be worn
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to be worn by both practitioner and client as appropriate
- Working in an environmentally sustainable manner

Prepare, position and protect the client and self

Taught content

- Ensure preparation complies with legal and organisational requirements.
- Prepare and protect client to prevent cross infection. Protect client's eyes, hair where appropriate, protect and/or cover clothing, request removal of clothing as appropriate
- Ensure skin is cleansed, free of makeup, oils, lotions, deodorants, debris and ensure the skin is dry prior to treatment
- Apply appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – disposable headband, disposable apron, disposable (non-latex) gloves, mask as appropriate, suitable eye protection for practitioner and client
- Position the client to meet the needs of the treatment, clearly instruct the client and, if required, use supports or pillows to ensure the position fits the needs of the treatment, does not compromise the treatment application or cause the client any discomfort
- Ensure effective, ergonomic positioning of couch, trolley, stool, equipment, accessories, and products to avoid injury to self, client and others.
- Ensure own posture and working methods minimise fatigue and the risk of injury to self, the client and others
- Ensure the working environment is private. Depending on area to be treated provide modesty towels/disposable tissue to protect clothing and provide modesty so the client does not feel exposed and vulnerable

Ensure environmental conditions are suitable for treatment

Taught content

- Ensure ventilation, temperature, ambience, lighting, wall and floor coverings are fit for purpose
- Ensure all tools and equipment are available and in safe working order
- Ensure appropriate PPE for both client and practitioner are in line with treatment protocols
- Ensure risks and hazards have been checked, for example, slip and trip hazards in the working area

Ensure the use of clean equipment and materials

Taught content

- Ensure all surfaces are clean and hygienic, trolley is tidy, equipment and accessories are sanitised and products set out ergonomically
- Equipment – disposable headbands, disposable dressing packs, disposable gloves, sterile gauze pack, antiseptic skin preparation, for example, chlorhexidine solution, sterile microneedling device (single use manual roller or needle cartridge for power-assisted device), Where a power-assisted skin needling device is being used, the needle cartridge must contain a backflow mechanism to prevent fluid being passed into the hand piece, eye protection for clinician, gauze
- Pre and post-products – Single use formulations for trans epidermal absorption such as peptides, enzymes, vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, hyaluronic acid, hydroxy acids, anti-inflammatory sebostatic agents, tyrosinase inhibitors
- Ensure that PPE is available and fit for purpose – clean, disposable non-latex gloves, mask as appropriate, disposable apron, disposable headband, suitable eye protection
- Ensure use of sterilisation and disinfectants for surfaces as required for treatment are in accordance with supplier/manufacturer guidelines
- Ensure use of sterilisation and disinfectants for equipment and accessories are in accordance with supplier/manufacturer guidelines

Promote environmental and sustainable working practices

Taught content

- Demonstrate environmental working practices, to be effective and energy efficient heating and ventilation to meet the workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 for client and employees
- Demonstrate sustainable working practices – products with ingredients from sustainable sources and using sustainable packaging, efficient storage and waste disposal, record product usage

Safe use of equipment, materials and products

Taught content

- Follow protocols for safe use including correct use of advanced skin needling systems, selection of needle depth and application techniques for different treatment objectives. Keep tops on bottles, make sure all products are labelled clearly in line with Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002, decant products into sterile pots to ensure correct amount is used prior to treatment where indicated

Prepare the area for treatment

Taught content

- Ensure the client's skin is clean and prepared for advanced skin needling treatment. Cleanse professionally with an appropriate cleanser to ensure all make-up, oils and debris are removed thoroughly. Protect vulnerable areas of face as indicated
- Apply appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – disposable headband, disposable apron, mask as appropriate, disposable non-latex gloves, suitable protective eyewear, protect client's eyes
- Use preparatory skin products thoroughly and evenly following supplier/manufacturer protocols/recommendations as appropriate
- Follow manufacturer protocols/recommendations

Selection of equipment

Taught content

- Ensure selection of a single use needle unit/device is new and prepared in line with health and safety guidelines for each client
- Note the expiry date on all sealed needle packaging, discard any that are past their expiry date
- Roller/derma pen/stamp – single use opened from new sealed and sterile packaging
- Automated pen – handpiece is cleaned and protected with disposable sleeve/film. Needle cartridge is opened from a new sealed, sterile packet and loaded in accordance with manufacturers' instructions

Needling size selection

Taught content

- Select the needle size for the skin condition and treatment objectives:
 - Up to 1.5mm for face
 - Up to 2mm for body
 - Level 4 training is recommended for up to 0.5mm on the face and 1mm on the body
 - Level 5 training is recommended for up to 1mm on the face and 1.5mm on the body
 - Level 6 training is recommended for up to 1.5mm on the face, 2mm on the body
- Match to treatment objectives and skin health characteristics and Fitzpatrick skin type
- Check condition of needles and for automated devices, check barrel moves freely

Apply the advanced skin needling treatment

Taught content

- Using adequate skin support and following techniques to avoid skin distension, tearing, bruising, excessive pressure or over treatment
- Apply product prior to needling application as appropriate
- Divide area into small areas (zones), select starting point
- Follow recommended protocol, ensure application demonstrates adequate skin support in all areas
- Application should not show skin distension, tearing or bruising
- Pressure should be adapted for all areas

Work systematically

Taught content

- Cover the areas to be treated using the required movements in the direction recommended
- Multi-directional sequence protocol to be followed (NB: only if required and according to treatment plan)
- Avoid uneven treatment, overlap and post procedure marking (tracking)

Calculate the duration and intensity of the application

Taught content

- Adjust the intensity, duration and depth of penetration to suit the client's skin characteristics, treatment objectives, including adaptation for Fitzpatrick skin type
- Demonstrate variation of intensity, depth and adaptation for Fitzpatrick skin types

Monitor the skin reaction and client response

Taught content

- Check on the skin's reaction and client response (using 1-10 pain threshold scale) – degree of erythema, bleeding, bruising and discontinue treatment if any adverse reactions occur
- Observe skin reaction and know when to stop treatment due to excessive erythema, bleeding or bruising

Verbally communicate with the client

Taught content

- Continually discuss sensation and level of discomfort with client throughout treatment. Know when to stop treatment if appropriate

Apply complementary single use formulations

Taught content

- Single use formulations for trans-epidermal penetration during treatment and post-treatment – peptides, enzymes, vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, hyaluronic acid, hydroxy acids, anti-inflammatory sebostatic agents, tyrosinase inhibitors
- Apply following manufacturer's protocols

Apply cooling skin procedures

Taught content

- Follow supplier/manufacturer instructions for techniques used when appropriate
 - Apply a sterile pad or swab to the skin after advanced skin needling
 - Apply appropriate product to cool and calm the skin

Apply post-treatment products

Taught content

- Moisturisers, topical anti-inflammatories, antioxidants, broad spectrum sunscreen – physical SPF 30 minimum with UVA protection

Take post-treatment photographs

Taught content

- Follow protocols for taking of clinical photographs to ensure clarity and consistency. Take photographs in same position as pre-treatment photographs and where possible in the same light. Position area to be treated so photographs are taken straight on and from both sides where applicable, zoom in on areas of concern, for example, pigmentations
- Personal devices should not be used to take images of clients
- Suitable devices include: DSLR/mirrorless cameras, smart phones with advanced cameras, and digital compact cameras
- Gain clients' consent for storage of clinical photographs and specific use of photographs for marketing and teaching purposes

Provide post-care advice and homecare

Taught content

- Immediate skin response
 - Erythema, swelling, hot, burning sensation. Give client advice on post-treatment and post-treatment products
- Post-treatment physical sensation and visual changes
 - Day 1 – erythema and redness like moderate sunburn with minor swelling, some pinpoint bleeding
 - Day 2 – erythema and mild swelling often starts to subside
 - Day 3 – as day 2 and skin appears pink
 - Day 1-3 – skin will feel dry and tight, moderate flaking can take place
 - All physical sensations and effects post-treatment depend on size of device used, technique and individual skin characteristics
 - Advise client how to cope with skin changes and provide a point of contact
- Post-treatment advice
 - Avoid AHAs, BHAs and Retinoids for 48 hours
 - Avoid make-up for 24 hours
 - Wash hands before touching treated area
 - Avoid pets and unclean surfaces to reduce risk of infection
 - Avoid immediate vigorous exercise and other spa/beauty treatments
 - Avoid sun exposure for at least 1 week, heat treatments, polluted atmospheres and topical preparations
 - Provide advice on suitable post-treatment products
 - Provide advice for ongoing/further advanced skin needling treatments and treatments which may be used in conjunction
 - Follow manufacturer/supplier recommendations in respect of treatment frequency
- Occasional side effects
 - Skin infection with bacteria or herpes simplex virus, milia and mild acne flares

Dispose of waste materials to meet legal requirements

Taught content

- Waste – disposed of using a hazardous waste bin
- A sharps bin should be available for peel glass bottles and microneedles
- Sharps and waste should be collected by licensed practitioners
- Needle stick injuries should be managed as per national guidance
- Hazardous waste – correct disposal of hazardous waste in line with local council regulations and disposed of following COSHH procedures

Complete the treatment in a commercially viable time

Taught content

- Ensure treatment is completed in a commercial time frame
- Smaller areas body i.e. scar: 45 minutes
- Larger body areas i.e. abdomen stretch marks: 60 minutes
- Face: 60 minutes
- Face & Neck: 75 minutes
- Chest: 45 minutes
- Numbing an additional 30 mins

Update client records

Taught content

- Accurate completion of treatment details, recording needling device used, needle size, depth and penetration, skin preparation, application techniques and duration of treatment, client skin sensation and skin response, observation of skin after treatment. Signature from client to be obtained accepting treatment results and skin response and agreeing to follow post-care/post-treatment advice. Practitioner signature to take responsibility for treatment and records completed

Comply with protocols to avoid cross infection

Taught content

- Ensure compliance with protocols to avoid cross-infection when handling post-treatment equipment and dispose of advanced skin needling device into sharps box
- Place rollers immediately into sharps box handling safely and correctly
- For automated devices, turn off and unplug where applicable, remove protective film/covers and dispose of in clinical biohazard waste. Remove the cartridge and place in a sharps box
- Clean handpiece of automated device following manufacturers' instructions
- Dispose of any swabs/cotton pads or waste from treatment application with PPE into clinical biohazard waste

Provide and manage post-treatment communications and outcomes

Taught content

- Communicate with the client regarding post-treatment care and concerns
- Inform the client how to manage complications/adverse reactions at home and when to refer to a medical practitioner
- Provide and inform the client of protocol for formal complaints
- Document post-treatment complications and adverse reactions in line with organisation guidelines
- Protocol for escalating a formal complaint to management prior to a medical practitioner

LO6 Be able to reflect on skin needling treatments

Evaluate effectiveness of treatments provided

Taught content

- Review client needs and effectiveness of treatment provided using current standards and guidelines for practice
- Collect Client Reported Outcome Measures (CROM) for treatments provided and use as a tool to improve practice
- Regularly review your procedures and outcomes to identify any safety concerns and address them promptly.
- Evaluate effectiveness of treatments provided – audit of overall treatment quality and aftercare provided for a defined number of clients as per CPSA guidelines
- Use client feedback to refine your approach and enhance client satisfaction
- Identify issues for continuous quality improvement

Evaluate and address future personal and professional development needs

Taught content

- Evaluate personal strengths and limitations in relation to education, training and CPD
- The importance of staying professionally updated with ongoing education and adaptation to new techniques and technologies
- Incorporate new knowledge and techniques into practice and reflect on their effectiveness
- Reflect on ethical dilemmas and how you handle them to ensure you adhere to CPSA guidelines or respective country guidelines
- Evaluate the ethical implications of delivering, marketing and advertising aesthetic treatments
- Reflect on professional behaviour and interactions with clients to maintain high standards of care

Assessment requirements

Learners must complete all assessment requirements related to this unit:

1. Clinical case studies
2. Theory examination
3. Practical examination

1. Clinical case studies

Learners must produce a treatment portfolio which is required to be completed under the supervision of a lecturer who must monitor the quality of the treatments performed throughout the learner's training, to ensure that they meet the given criteria. All clinical case studies must be completed and marked prior to the learner completing the practical and theoretical examinations.

Learners must complete **a minimum of 12 clinical case studies**. There is a requirement for an even distribution of case studies across levels 4, 5, and 6, with four case studies allocated to each level. Each case study needs to include a full medical history of the client, advanced skin assessment, before and after pictures and a full description of the conditions/characteristics to be treated. A detailed description of the application technique, equipment used and the duration of the treatment must also be provided. Each case study must also include an evaluation of the treatment and its outcomes, pre and post-treatment skincare product recommendations and post-treatment advice.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO6 Be able to reflect on skin needling treatments	6.1 Evaluate effectiveness of treatments provided
	6.2 Evaluate and address future personal and professional development needs

Range to be included in clinical case studies:

- Met the needs of **all** clients:
 - New
 - Existing
- Carried out **all** consultation techniques:
 - Questioning – verbal
 - Listening – non-verbal
 - Visual – non-verbal
 - Manual
 - Written
 - Pre-treatment photographs taken

- Carried out **all** skin sensitivity tests:
 - Patch test
 - Thermal test
 - Tactile test

- Carried out an advanced skin health check and assessment:
 - Advanced skin health check and assessment

- Met **all** treatment objectives:
 - Reduction of fine lines
 - Improved skin condition
 - Improved skin texture
 - Skin laxity improvement
 - Stretch mark improvement
 - Scar reduction

- Treated **all** areas:
 - Face
 - Neck
 - Chest

- Treated **a minimum of three** body areas:
 - Back of hands
 - Arms
 - Legs
 - Abdomen

- Considered **all** factors of skin characteristics:
 - Fitzpatrick scale (1-4)
 - Level of sensitivity
 - Thickness of skin
 - Epidermal thickness
 - Healing capacity

- Taken **all** courses of necessary action:
 - Explaining why treatment cannot be carried out
 - Encouraging the client to seek medical advice if applicable
 - Modification of treatment

- Used a range of depths:
 - Level 4
 - 0.5mm needle unit for the face
 - 1mm needle unit for the body
 - Level 5
 - 1mm unit for the face
 - 1.5mm unit for the body
 - Level 6
 - 1.5mm unit for the face
 - 2mm unit for the body

- Use **all** types of equipment:
 - Manual needling devices – stamp, pen, roller
 - Automated needling device

- Given **all** advice and recommendations:
 - Suitable post-care products and their uses
 - Pre-treatment skincare products and lifestyle recommendations
 - Avoidance of activities which may cause contra-actions
 - Modifications to lifestyle patterns
 - Recovery and skin healing process
 - Post-treatment contra-actions and how to deal with them
 - Frequency and benefits of courses of treatments
 - Timing and benefits of future maintenance treatments
 - Treatments which could be given in conjunction with/after advanced skin needling treatment
 - Present and future products and treatments recommended
 - Use of SPF products
 - Issuing of written post-care advice
 - Recording before and after photographs

2. Theory examination

Learners must complete a theory examination for this unit. This will consist of a multiple-choice question paper which is mapped to the relevant assessment criteria stated below.

The theory examination will test knowledge and understanding from across LO1, LO2 and LO3. Learners should use the unit content sections of this unit to aid revision since exam questions will test the full breadth of this content over time.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO1 Know the relevant anatomy, physiology and pathologies for advanced skin needling	1.1 Structure and functions of the skin and relevance to advanced skin needling treatments
	1.2 Principles of controlled wound healing
	1.3 Structure and functions of the circulatory and lymphatic systems and relevance to advanced skin needling treatments
	1.4 Principles and functions of the endocrine system and relevance to advanced skin needling treatments
	1.5 Associated pathologies and relevant terminology of the skin
	1.6 Associated pathologies of the circulatory system
	1.7 Associated pathologies of the lymphatic system
	1.8 Associated pathologies of the endocrine system

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO2 Understand the safety considerations when providing advanced skin needling treatments	2.1 Safety considerations of product and equipment sourcing
	2.2 Insurance requirement guidelines
	2.3 Hygiene considerations
	2.4 Hygiene and infection control
	2.5 Features, benefits and uses of treatment products
	2.6 Associated hazards and risks
	2.7 Importance of following supplier's and manufacturer's instructions for safe use
	2.8 Treatment age restrictions
	2.9 Timings of treatment
	2.10 Contra-indications that would prevent or restrict treatment
	2.11 Contra-indications requiring medical referral
	2.12 Referring contra-indicated clients
	2.13 When to consult with other aesthetic professionals

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO3 Understand how to provide advanced skin needling treatments	3.1 Requirements for treatment planning
	3.2 Factors to consider when treatment planning
	3.3 Assessing skin characteristics
	3.4 Treatment advice and information to be provided to the client pre-treatment, during and post-treatment
	3.5 Pain threshold and sensitivity variations
	3.6 Requirements for skin sensitivity testing prior to treatment
	3.7 Pre-treatment preparatory skin care programmes
	3.8 Cleansing the skin prior to treatment
	3.9 Types and purpose of advanced needling products
	3.10 Preparation techniques for products and equipment
	3.11 Selection of advanced skin needling products and equipment
	3.12 Method of application
	3.13 Adaptations to treatment
	3.14 Areas to avoid
	3.15 Use and limitations of advanced skin needling products and equipment
	3.16 Benefits and effects of treatment
	3.17 Effects and risks associated with the treatment
	3.18 Contra-actions which may occur
	3.19 The pre and post-treatment products available
	3.20 The benefits and use of inhibitors
	3.21 The use of SPF and UVA specific sun protection products
	3.22 Prevent infection and promote healing
	3.23 Treatment progression and additional/complementary treatment recommendations

3. Practical examination

Learners must complete a practical examination for this unit which will be externally set by VTCT Skills and examined and marked by an external examiner. The practical examination will take place at the end of the period of learning.

The content of LO4 and LO5 are assessed by a practical examination.

The practical examination will be conducted by an external examiner.

In preparation for the practical examination, centres are advised to ensure learners have carried out the outlined range of assessed clinical case studies, comprising complete practical treatments, in accordance with the practical assessment criteria for the qualification.

It is essential centres use the practical examination criteria document in order to prepare learners for the practical examination. This can be found on the VTCT Skills and ITEC websites. The practical examination must take place under controlled conditions, in a realistic working environment on a real client and in a commercially acceptable time frame for the practical treatment being examined.

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO4 Be able to consult, plan and prepare for advanced skin needling treatment	4.1 Use consultation techniques to determine the client's treatment plan
	4.2 Identify the client's medical history, indications for and aims of treatment
	4.3 Explain the cooling off period
	4.4 Establish the condition of the skin
	4.5 Explain the treatment procedures
	4.6 Select a preparatory skin care programme
	4.7 Take pre-treatment visual media records
	4.8 Carry out skin sensitivity tests
	4.9 Select suitable equipment and products
	4.10 Finalise and agree the treatment plan
	4.11 Obtain signed, informed consent
	4.12 Select appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
LO5 Be able to provide advanced skin needling treatments	5.1 Maintain own responsibilities for health and safety through the treatment
	5.2 Prepare, position and protect the client and self
	5.3 Ensure environmental conditions are suitable for treatment
	5.4 Ensure the use of clean equipment and materials
	5.5 Promote environmental and sustainable working practices
	5.6 Safely use equipment, materials and products
	5.7 Prepare the area for treatment
	5.8 Select needling size for skin condition and treatment objectives
	5.9 Apply the advanced skin needling treatment
	5.10 Work systematically
	5.11 Calculate the duration and intensity of the application
	5.12 Monitor the skin reaction and client response
	5.13 Apply complementary single use formulations
	5.14 Apply skin cooling procedures
	5.15 Apply post-treatment products
	5.16 Take post-treatment visual media records
	5.17 Provide post procedure and homecare advice
	5.18 Dispose of waste materials to meet legal requirements
	5.19 Complete the treatment in a commercially viable time
	5.20 Update client records
	5.21 Comply with protocols to avoid cross infection
	5.22 Provide and manage post-treatment communications and outcomes

Document History

Version	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v1	09/05/2025	First published	Qualification Development Manager