

Dr. Kotlus - Peer to Peer Education in Malaysia and Thailand



Cosmetic surgery is everywhere. Reality television shows, magazine racks, and billboards- it's become mainstream. It should come as no surprise that Southeast Asians are just as interested in cosmetic surgery as Americans. Last month, I traveled to Malaysia and Thailand to meet with physicians who were interested in cosmetic laser procedures. It proved to be a memorable and rewarding experience.

After 24 hours of flying, I visited a plastic surgeon in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia who was the first in his country to perform CoolLipo, the newest form of liposuction using a laser. He explained to me that while Malaysia does not have the same obesity problem that we face in America, Malaysians are very conscientious about their appearances. They tend to seek the latest cosmetic advances, and that has helped him to provide services such as laser liposuction. Now, other Malaysian doctors are taking notice.



At the Annual Malaysian Congress of Plastic Surgeons, I held a workshop with a live demonstration of CoolLipo of the arms. Using a live video and audio feed, the Malaysian doctors asked questions during the procedure. They were especially fascinated with the ease of the procedure, and how the patient could remain totally awake and completely pain-free while I reduced the amount of fatty tissue under her arms with the laser.

For every state-of-the-art technique being practiced in Malaysia, there is a non-traditional counterpart. Walking through the streets, I came across what was termed a "fish-spa". Intrigued, I looked inside and found a huge tank of small, toothless fish. Clients will place their hands or feet in the tank for a fee, and hundreds of fish will eat the devitalized skin from their bodies. It's a living form of microdermabrasion! But due to sanitary reasons, this therapy will not likely find its way to the U.S. in the near future.



Bangkok, Thailand was my next stop, where I spoke with several plastic surgeons and dermatologists about laser vein treatments and CoolLipo. Thailand is well-known for its cosmetic surgery tourism, where patients will travel from other parts of the world to have cosmetic enhancements before returning home. For this reason, Thai surgeons prefer techniques with less down-time; laser liposuction and laser vein removal offer these advantages.

CoolLipo results in less bruising and discomfort than traditional methods, making it perfect for those with active lifestyles. One of the Thai cosmetic surgeons and I performed a laser liposuction of the neck with fantastic results in a modern operating room that matched the United States in resources and efficiency. On my way back to the hotel, I was abruptly reminded that I definitely was not in the U.S., when I saw a baby elephant being led down the sidewalk! Bangkok is certainly a city of contrasts.

My journey to Southeast Asia was one that I will not soon forget. Every occasion in which I teach others also provides me with a learning opportunity. I plan to take advantage of these opportunities every chance I get.

