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# ACCENT

## THE KING OF MESOTHERAPY

*Dr. Lionel Bissoon of Lake Worth aims to help women achieve the bodies they want.*

By CAROLYN SUSMAN  
Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

The beautiful blond with the bouncy bottom clenches her fists and squinches up her eyes as she is injected multiple times with the 4 mm needles that deliver a solution to dissolve her cellulite.

Dimpled thighs are a no-no for many young women, and Lionel Bissoon, the doctor who is busy jabbing the blond, has a cadre of performers and models who come to him for mesotherapy treatments. The procedure got its name because the injections penetrate the mesoderm, the middle layers of skin, to break down fat cells.

Bissoon's clients are looking not only for cellulite reduction, but also for weight reduction, and Bissoon, with offices in West Palm Beach, New York and Beverly Hills, whips up solutions for both purposes, using Food and Drug Administration-approved drugs, vitamins, homeopathic medicines and plant extracts.

"I mix the solutions myself. I don't trust anyone else to do it," he says.

Who would have thought that



GREG LOVETT/Staff Photographer

A patient gets a shot of solution from Dr. Lionel Bissoon to reduce cellulite and help with weight loss. Dieting and exercising are also necessary for lasting results.

the teenager who dropped out of Lake Worth High School, eventually getting his GED, would be the toast of both coasts, charging \$350 and up per session for treatments that can run more than 15 sessions?

Bissoon, who came to Palm Beach County from Trinidad when he was 15, graduated from

Des Moines University's College of Osteopathic Medicine. He didn't start out with thoughts of catering to the beautiful and famous.

In fact, the 41-year-old, who grew up in Lake Worth, served as a flight surgeon in the Air Force before eventually opening a

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## Procedure still controversial in U.S.

## ► MESOTHERAPY from 1D

practice that specialized in sports medicine. A female patient in New York introduced him to mesotherapy in 1998. The technique was developed in France in 1952 but remains controversial in the United States.

"There is a theoretical possibility that this could work, that the injections could break down fat, but there is no scientific proof of it," says Dr. Leroy Young, of St. Louis, a spokesman for the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and chairman of the Emerging Trends Task Force.

"In the absence of scientific proof, the caution would be: Shy away from it and stick to more conventional methods like diet or exercise or liposuction."

Bissoon says the only problem he has seen in the more than 300 patients he has treated is bruising, and the weight-loss treatment does require diet and exercise, along with his shots, to achieve results.

Not shy about his discovery — he says he was the fourth American trained in this method — he has been featured in *W*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *People*.

Today, as he sits in his West Palm Beach office, '70s Grammy winner Roberta Flack (*Killing Me Softly, The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*) calls him on his cellphone three times, trying to arrange her next weight-reduction appointment. She even invites him to the upcoming Grammy awards program that week-end in New York.

"I'm extremely happy. This makes me lose weight," she chatters into the phone.

She gets shots "from the knees to underneath the bust line," she says, and has lost 32 pounds and "a couple dress sizes."

Her weight loss, and



GREG LOVETT/Staff Photographer

Dr. Lionel Bissoon treats Elyse Geraghty at his office in West Palm Beach. He also has offices in New York and Beverly Hills, Calif., and has been featured in *W*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *People* magazines.

praise for Bissoon, was catalogued in the Jan. 20 *People*.

"I don't have anything to hide," she says, adding that being overweight never held back her career.

"But it's my health I have to get control of," the 62-year-old singer says.

Bissoon has tried the treatment on himself, he says, using it four times "for love handles. It's just another tool in the arsenal."

As with Botox or any other medical procedure, Bissoon requires patients to sign consent forms and undergo an allergy test to be certain they are good candidates. He also uses a bit of lidocaine to reduce pain and help with circulation, and he prescribes a topical ointment to numb the areas getting injections.

The shots take 15-20 minutes, but some sessions need an hour, depending on the size of the patient. The injection technique has also been used to administer drugs for arthritis, headaches and even hair loss. Bissoon says he prefers to do cosmetic me-

sotherapy, rather than treat medical conditions, and steers away from treating hair loss where shots to the scalp are required. "I don't want to cause that much pain. I don't like people screaming."

Of the patients he sees for mesotherapy, 60 percent come for cellulite treatment, 30 percent for weight and 10 percent for rejuvenating injections to the face.

Flack told *People* that she does face rejuvenation shots of vitamin A, C and E. "My skin is smoothed out. I have a younger glow. People say, 'You look goood!'"

Effects are long-lasting, Bissoon says. Results are visible immediately in some cases, but most require two to three sessions before a change can be seen. A follow-up treatment is generally recommended once or twice a year.

"Aging is a dynamic process," says Bissoon's Web site — [www.mesoestetik.com](http://www.mesoestetik.com) — and "you'll need to address signs of aging as they are manifested."

You'll also need to address your checkbook. These treatments aren't covered by insurance, although Bissoon says he charges less for pain treatment sessions than for cosmetic procedures.

Because he's tilted in favor of beautifying, his clientele has developed into a flock of fabulous-looking women who think they don't look good enough.

The bouncy blond cabaret singer with the large blue eyes suffers her last shot, picks up her puppy dog in his carry-case and leaves Bissoon to contemplate how his life has changed so drastically since he was an immigrant thrown into Lake Worth's melting pot.

"I would see my mother reading these women's magazines and would think, (seeing articles about doctors), how did these guys do this? And I'm in there now. My God, people are now looking to me for advice. I've certainly come a long way in life."

Bissoon can be reached in West Palm Beach at 655-3031.

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