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## Preface

Laser and IPL technology have brought about thorough ongoing changes in the treatment options for many clinical pictures encountered in dermatology during recent years. The specialism of aesthetic medicine has benefited greatly from all this. The rapid technical progress and the frequent emergence of new equipment and indications make it extraordinarily difficult for the interested doctor to get an overview of the research position and the possibilities and the limitations of these procedures. Disconcertingly, popular science publications also have a role in all this, so that the need for factual and objective information is constantly becoming more intense, especially as there are very few evidence-based scientific studies available on the possible applications of new laser techniques. In addition, the time elapsing between current knowledge and developments and their practical implementation is becoming shorter and shorter.

This book is addressed equally to specialists who already have experience in using laser and IPL systems and to doctors and students who harbor the ambition of becoming well-informed about the specific treatment options so as to be in a position to give patients competent advice. Without a precise and structured digest of results from research and technology, including the most recent, it is not possible for the clinician to guarantee up-to-date and correct care of the patient.

We have been able to secure international opinion of leaders for all the chapters of this book. This was the only way to fulfill our own ambition of taking full account of the rapid further development of the specialist area and to give the reader an up-to-date overview of laser therapy in dermatological-aesthetic medicine and its fringe areas, including photodynamic therapy. We have tried consistently to achieve a uniform presentation, with reference also to terminology and the structure of the texts. Where there turned out to be differences in various authors' opinions, both sides had the chance to make their case.

This textbook gives the theoretical bases of laser and IPL technology and reviews the voluminous current knowledge on the various indications. References to unsolved problems or questions that are still under discussion are found in the appropriate text sections. The chapters each have a list of the background literature and further reading matter. It would not have been possible to avoid overlappings and repeats, and they are intentional to ensure that each of the individual texts can be complete in itself.

We are particularly concerned to profile conventional alternatives to laser treatment insofar as they are better based in medicine and more economical. The quality of a method is determined to a decisive degree by careful observation of indications, and laser and IPL technology are far from being a universal panacea – not least because of the potential risks inherent in them. We therefore thought it was important

to sensitize the reader to complications, safety, administration of treatment by persons with no medical qualifications, and forensic considerations.

This book is no more able than any other to be a substitute for first-hand experience with patients. Consultation and critical analysis of diagnosis and therapy options remain an essential component of the doctor's work. For this reason one chapter is devoted entirely to ethical aspects of laser therapy.

Our sincere thanks are due to all the authors for their committed cooperation on this multiauthor work. We thank our staff assistants and colleagues for their constructive criticisms and their many hours of hard work without which it would not have been possible to prepare the book within the planned time frame. All patients who are recognizable in the illustrations have kindly given their consent to this. At this point, we should like to thank them cordially for their support. Our book is not made up solely of theory, but takes life from the many illustrative clinical examples. Not least, we are very grateful to Springer-Verlag, especially the clinical medicine editors Dr Tobias Kemme, Dr Sverre Klemp and Mrs Ellen Blasig, for their efficient project management and the successful structure of the book, and Mr Sreejith Viswanathan for his excellent editorial work.

We are pleased to say we feel confident that this text has presented laser and IPL therapy as used in dermatology and aesthetic medicine in a well-rounded manner and on the basis of comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of the current scientific status.

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