

CUSTOMER CASE

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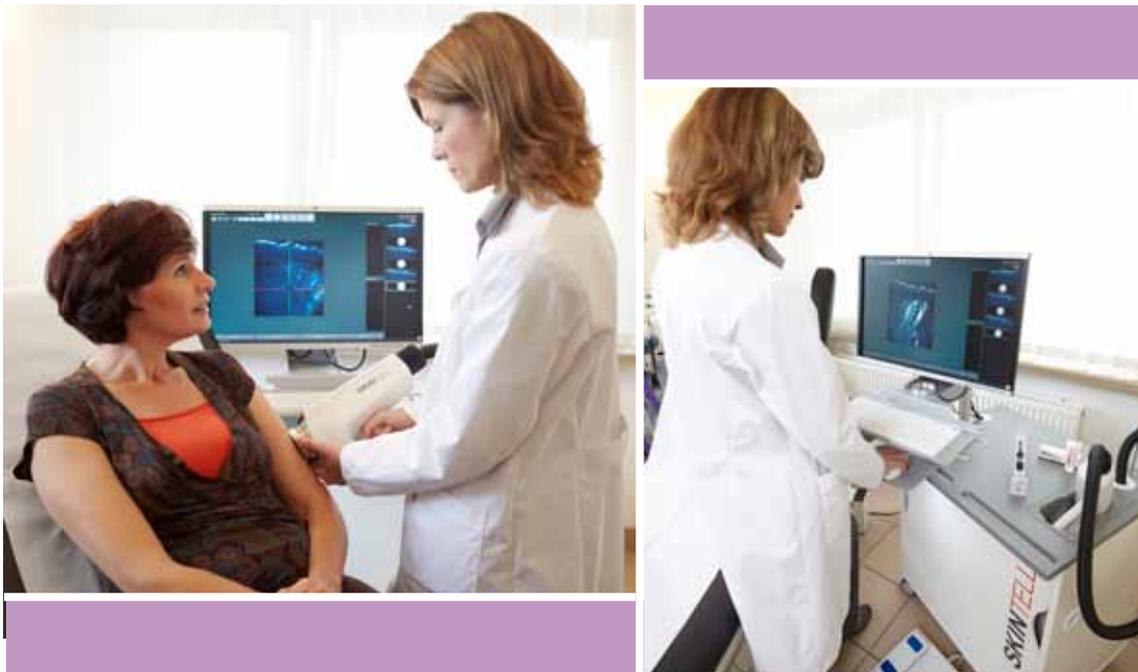
*Dr. Marc Boone,
dermatologist-allergologist*



Dermatology and Allergy Private Practice, Meise, Belgium

New imaging technology that gets under the skin

Highly specialized tomography increases understanding
of the human skin



Seventeen years after starting his own practice in the green border area surrounding Brussels, dermatologist-allergologist Dr. Marc Boone is more passionate than ever about his job. “Imaging technology has been pushing the boundaries of classical dermatology, allowing us to carve our own field of competence,” he says. “The Agfa HealthCare SKINTELL Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) solution* is another step forward in understanding the human skin and all its intricacies.”

Solution

- SKINTELL OCT solution to perform immediate skin and epidermis analysis in real time

Agfa HealthCare’s contribution

- Medical imaging expertise specifically designed for dermatologists
- Working closely with dermatologist-allergologist to optimize OCT image quality

Dr. Boone has been an early adopter of imaging technology ever since he started his private practice. “I experienced the complications of working in large organizations and the impossibility of achieving a rewarding academic career without the distractions of consultative work. So I decided to focus on three fields as an independent dermatology and allergy specialist. Clinical dermatology provides the work volume to keep me challenged in treating skin disease; my attention to allergies follows my passion for immunology, genetics and molecular cell biology, and third, over the years I’ve developed expertise in early skin cancer detection. I was one of the first in Belgium to examine for pigmented skin lesions and melanomas with digital epiluminescence microscopy, later with high frequency ultrasound, which allows me to size up tumors in two- or three-dimensional images up to 1.5 cm skin-deep, and recently with confocal scanning microscopy.”

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OCT ends systematic use of classical biopsies

Thirty-three thousand patients later, with the wisdom of the seasoned specialist passionately involved with his job and the technology that goes with it, Dr. Boone did not hesitate when Agfa HealthCare suggested to put his competence and skills at the service of its SKINTELL Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT). “It’s to dermatologists what the stethoscope is to lung specialists,” he explains.

“OCT successfully overcomes some of the considerable limitations of classical biopsies. It’s a non-invasive technique to examine the epidermal morphology and the superficial dermis. Developed some fifteen years ago, Agfa HealthCare has now managed to improve the axial and lateral resolution of the images in such a way that even individual cells can be detected. Contrary to classical biopsy, the absence of iatrogenic trauma means that measuring can happen at the very same place on the dermis every time, ideal and essential for observing skin trauma, treatment efficiency, and natural recovery over time. Furthermore, OCT allows using classical biopsy more adequately when needed.”

Five minutes instead of two weeks to a diagnosis

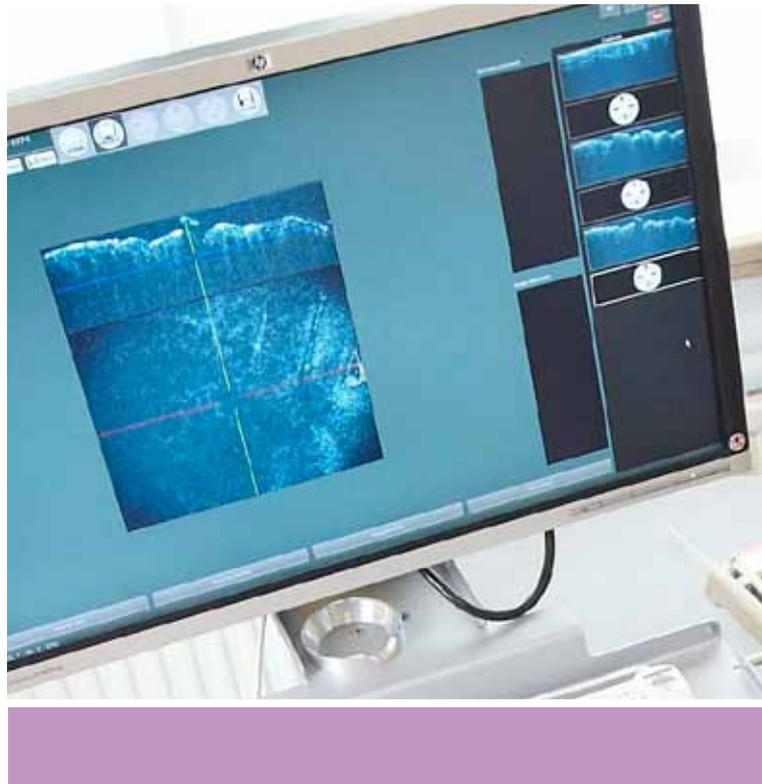
Almost fifty years old, Dr. Boone has not buried his academic ambitions. He is completing his PhD thesis in Medicine on epidermal barrier dysfunction, using his professional activity to compose the corpus of his work. “The Agfa HealthCare OCT solution shows the right detail of the skin, like a roadmap illustrates streets and towns. The image detail is sufficient to detect cells, but the same image still offers the larger perspective.” And it is a productive tool, both for the patient and dermatologist, Dr. Boone points out: “With SKINTELL OCT, I need 5 minutes to take an image, render it and make a diagnosis. Prior to OCT, I needed to make a biopsy, wait two weeks for lab results and call in the patient for a second consult. Patients appreciate the speed and the real-time analysis of the image. It creates confidence in their doctor.”

Technology to professionalize dermatology diagnosis and treatment

There’s no doubt that OCT technology will win over the dermatology community, claims Dr. Boone. “You need to embrace this new way of seeing the skin. And the technology is extremely

Did you know...

- DermIS.net is the largest dermatology information service available on the Internet. It offers elaborate atlases which contain about 3,000 clinical images covering more than 600 dermatological diagnoses, complete with case reports and additional information on almost all skin diseases.
- Optical coherence tomography is widely used to obtain high-resolution images of the retina and the anterior segment of the eye as a straightforward method of assessing axonal integrity in multiple sclerosis. Researchers are also developing a method that uses OCT to image coronary arteries to detect vulnerable lipid-rich plaques.
- OCT is also applicable and increasingly used in industrial applications, such as Non Destructive Testing (NDT) and material thickness measurements, as well as art conservation where it can analyze different layers in a painting.



attractive: it is non-invasive, fast and allows for immediate diagnosis based on accurate and detailed epidermal images. As I get used to OCT images, I find that I resort less and less to classical biopsy.” Dr. Boone looks at technology as a way to professionalize dermatology diagnosis and treatment, steering away from the cortisone-driven classic approach. “The pathogenesis of skin diseases is often labelled ‘unknown’, which is very frustrating for both the patient and the dermatologist. Medical imaging technology will certainly help us better understand the physiopathology. As a result, these ‘unknowns’ will gradually be eliminated and replaced by meaningful analysis.” And eventually, that’s how the Agfa HealthCare SKINTELL OCT solution pays back, says Dr. Boone: “Quality outcome, optimal care, more patient loyalty to the therapy... and the dermatologist.”

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