

The London Nail Laser Clinic New Technology Treats Toenail Fungus

By Dan Phairas

In the United Kingdom, Harley Street is to medicine what Fleet Street is to journalism and Downing Street is to politics. Located in the Central London borough of Westminster, Harley Street is the epicenter of elite medical practice in the UK and is world-renowned as a center of medical excellence.

The London Nail Laser Clinic sits at 10 Harley Street among practices at the forefront of medical science and technological advancements.

Its proprietors are Martine and Michael Abrahams, a husband and wife team sharing twenty-four years of podiatry experience. Almost a year ago they introduced a new specialized treatment to Harley Street. The Abrahams accessed the **PinPointe FootLaser™** and began treating toenail fungus.

Michael Abrahams started his first private practice eight years ago in Radlett, a large village north of London where he is based. Martine was with the National Health Service for ten years but stopped working several years ago after having two children. Last year the children reached school age and Martine was ready for a new work project. It was at this time that Michael and Martine first heard about the PinPointe FootLaser™. This is their account of how they started The London Nail Laser Clinic and how they continue to run it successfully.

The PinPointe FootLaser™

"In the UK many podiatrists cut people's toenails, remove hard skin

and corns, and that's generally what we do," states Martine Abrahams, "but I wanted to do something other than routine podiatry." Martine had been involved with specialized clinics and podiatry services management and she wanted to use some of that experience.



Martine and Michael Abrahams

"I was trying to find something that would challenge me," she continued. "Something that would be exciting and could position our clinic at the forefront of podiatry in the UK."

In March of 2009 the Abrahams heard about the

PinPointe FootLaser™. "We spoke with representatives from PinPointe USA and emailed about ten different podiatrists who had been using the laser," says Martine. "Dr. Michael Uro [in Sacramento, California] had been doing it with a completely separate company and that seemed to be a good scenario. So we decided to do it and thought Harley Street would be the right location and the right environment."

New Business Preparation

Before the Abrahams went to America to be trained on the laser system, they contacted a creative consultant, a PR agency, and a media planner. "They helped us develop a marketing strategy, and the name and branding for the London Nail Laser Clinic," explains Michael. "They produced a press release for us and approached various newspapers, magazines, editors, and journalists. So we knew what was involved, what we'd be spending, and what kind of media was out there to utilize."

Soon the Abrahams realized

that most of their efforts would come through paid advertising, so their media planner produced a six-month plan in various local papers, national papers, and national magazines. "At the same time," says Martine, "the creative consultant produced a website for us which was very comprehensive and on the same level as a branded cosmetic company. The whole idea was to say, 'this is all we do.'"

Marketing Mix

The Abrahams say they see about 40% of their patients via Internet advertising. "We also advertise in the free newspapers given to commuters on the underground and the trains," explains Martine. "Their readership is about 2 million in London. Quite expensive, but we always seem to get a response from it. When we have an advert, the phones ring and we see our web hits go from 30 or 40 to 200 or even over 400 on some occasions. We've also done a whole host of magazines, local papers, and national papers."

"In terms of frequency," adds Michael, "we're probably doing an ad in a commuter paper twice a month, a national paper once or twice a month, and probably every two months we're doing a magazine."

Customer Response

The Abrahams were surprised at how far away people come to have the treatments. "We've had patients from Switzerland, Scotland, Munich, Singapore, Spain, Italy, and Israel," says Martine, "so there's a whole host of people who respond to the marketing. We also provide a zero-percent finance program so people can pay in installments without paying any interest. That opens up the market to those who don't immediately have the money."

Circle #154

Toenail Fungus...

Inquiries and Consultations

"When people call with inquiries we spend the time to talk through the procedure," states Michael. "We explain the cost of what's involved and what we do, so when they come in for a consultation they have a pretty good idea that they're going to go ahead with the treatment."

"We've had over 800 telephone calls and 350 emails inquiring about the treatment," adds Martine. "Of those 1,150 inquiries we've treated over 250 patients, so over 20% of the inquiries have resulted in treatments. We also have a toll-free call answering service that provides some basic information and takes messages and then we call the clients back."

"We do offer a free consultation. We allow an hour and a half for the consultation and the treatment. By the time we discuss it with the patient, thin down the nails and do all that, it's about 40 minutes. And then by the time we lase all the nails it can be another 40 minutes".

Future Plans

The Abrahams are looking at expanding. "We've had meetings with a private clinic in Notting Hill that offers a whole host of services," says Martine. "They cover four locations in London so we're looking at doing laser treatments there. We're advertising in London anyway so we'd like to utilize the laser in as many locations as we can."

"The other thing we're looking forward to," adds Michael, "is creating a name for ourselves in this spe-

cialized field. Now that we're seeing results with our patients we want to go out and create referral partnerships with other doctors. They need to know about us and what we do before they can refer to us. We want to be a trusted specialist that doctors refer to for fungal nail infections because they believe it's the right treatment choice."

Professional Satisfaction

"This has been a very exciting experience," states Martine. "It's very nice changing the way you work and having the opportunity to be involved in cutting edge technology, at the forefront of a new treatment."

"I saw a patient for a five-month review," recalls Michael, "and she was literally jumping for joy as I said, 'Yes, it's improving.' She

was so thrilled. It was just amazing. It's very satisfying to be able to do that."

"Also, I think podiatrists here often don't take the lead in many things. Every so often there are articles about foot-related issues and it's a physical therapist or an occupational therapist or someone else talking about it, not a podiatrist. So it's nice to be actually doing something for a condition that other specialists don't treat, and is a very unique, very podiatric-based problem. No one else deals with fungal nail infections well so it's nice to be involved with that and be able to treat it."

Benefits to the Practice

"One of the nice things is

that, as this gets busier, I'll be able to happily pick and choose what I do and when I work in my general practice," says Michael. "It gives me a little bit more freedom. Also my non-patient contact time is far more valuable now than ever before. To spend time on the phone returning an inquiry call is potentially more profitable because if they come in for a treatment, that's £750 (\$1,225) compared to a normal fee in the practice."

"So obviously there's the financial element," adds Martine, "but putting that to the side, there's also the issue of raising the level of the practice. Offering a treatment like this potentially makes our practice stand out from other practices. If you're looking for a new podiatrist, the fact that we offer something unique could be a selling point or a reason to choose us."

Efficacy

"Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the patients we've treated and reviewed after five months have a noticeable improvement in their nails," says Martine. "The nail condition has improved and the patients feel their feet are healthier too."

"We're helping people feel happy and proud of their feet. People don't want to hide their feet away. They really do appreciate healthy feet and feeling comfortable showing them in public. The treatment we offer makes this possible and we look forward to sharing it with as many patients as we can."

To contact The London Nail Laser Clinic, visit www.thelondonnaillaserclinic.co.uk/

To contact PinPointe USA, call 530-809-3800, visit www.pin-pointeusa.com, or circle #154 on the reader service card.



The Pinpointe Foot Laser

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