



PHOTOS: YEN MENG JIYI

RAY OF LIGHT

American dermatologist Dr Vivian Bucay (above) is excited about elure's (left) proprietary ingredient Melanozyme. She said her patients saw lightening of their brown spots after four weeks, adding that in earlier treatments like peels and laser applications, their pigmentation came right back.

White knights

New whitening skincare line elure is a breakthrough in treating stubborn pigmentation. **By Corinne Kerk**

THERE'S a new whitening technology in town and it could well set the standard for the treatment of pigmentation from now on.

This week, elure Advanced Skin Whitening Technology made its worldwide debut in Singapore, with its makers claiming it is the first and only skin-lightening product that works by directly breaking down melanin – the molecule that accumulates in the skin to cause a darkened appearance.

Its organically based active ingredient is lignin peroxidase, an enzyme derived from a tree fungus. This enzyme is a key agent in breaking down lignin in decaying trees, thus causing rapid decolourisation. Because the molecular structure of lignin – an organic polymer found in the cell walls of plants – is similar to that of melanin, researchers went on to confirm that lignin peroxidase also breaks down melanin.

Israeli biotech company, Rakuto Bio Technologies (RBT), found a way to isolate and produce this enzyme, which has been trademarked as Melanozyme. RBT, meanwhile, is an affiliate of Syneron, a global aesthetic device company headquartered in Israel that has the rights to license the products under its name. The Melanozyme is made in Switzerland, and the products themselves, in the Philippines.

While other skin-lightening products inhibit melanin formation, elure targets and disintegrates melanin to obtain faster results. Traditional whitening agents also often include hydroquinone.

This can cause side-effects such as redness and burning sensations. However, Syneron says Melanozyme has virtually no sideeffects, and can be used on all skin types, including sensitive skin.

The application of elure – currently comprising a facial wash, lotion and night cream – is a two-step process. After cleansing with the facial wash, the active Melanozyme from either the lotion or night cream is applied and allowed to penetrate for about two minutes.

This is followed by the Bio Activator component of the lotion or cream, which initiates the skin-lightening process. The enzyme works on existing melanin to destroy them, and its activity on the skin is complete in about an hour, so there is no risk of the user turning overly white or for long-term skin damage to occur.

You can also add on your usual creams to the skin once the elure products have been given a few minutes to be completely



absorbed.

What is impressive is how quickly elure works. It can show a 15 to 20 per cent improvement in as few as seven days after treatment begins.

"After 28 days, there is a 70 per cent reduction in spots," says Dr Alain Khaiat,

president of Singapore-based Seers Consulting and a veteran in skincare product development with 25 years of involvement in whitening technology.

"All products in the market try to prevent pigmentation and take about three months to show results, if any. So I was excited when I was told about this six years ago," says Dr Khaiat, who was roped in to assess the safety and efficacy of elure's formula, which was tested on about 100 subjects.

Dr Vivian Bucay, an American dermatologist who is one of the few doctors in the United States given the opportunity to use the products before their launch, tested them over four to six weeks on 15 female patients.

These women were either Asian, African-American or Hispanic and had a variety of pigmentation problems, including melasma and age spots. "These were the

most difficult cases, patients on whom I've used chemical peels, lasers, hydroquinone and tretinoin, basically everything in my arsenal, but their pigmentation came right back, even with the use of sunblock," she says. "But for them, they can use elure."

She observed that the patients experienced no skin irritation, found elure easy to use and 12 of them saw lightening of their brown spots after four weeks. One patient who used it on her hands also saw the age spots disappear completely.

Tom Albright, president and general manager of Syneron's topical aesthetic division, says Singapore was chosen for the global launch due to its high demand per capita for cosmetics and a discerning population that is well-versed in the latest technology.

While no prescription is needed, elure is only available at clinics and medical spas such as Waffles Wu Aesthetic Surgery & Laser Centre, KK Hospital and Nu.Reflections Medical Aesthetics because he believes that "to have professional products, it's best to have doctors using them".

The set of three products sell for \$690 and will be available in America later this year and then other Asian countries over the next few months. Syneron is already working on new products to be launched in the future, confident as they are, of elure's success.

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