Effect of estrogens on skin aging and the potential role of selective estrogen receptor modulators

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Estrogens have a profound influence on skin. The relative hypoestrogenism that accompanies menopause exacerbates the deleterious effects of both intrinsic and environmental aging. Estrogens prevent skin aging. They increase skin thickness and improve skin moisture. Beneficial effects of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) on skin aging have been well documented, but HRT cannot obviously be recommended solely to treat skin aging in menopausal women. Topical estrogen application is highly effective and safe if used by a dermatologist with expertise in endocrinology. The question of whether estrogen alternatives such as phytoestrogens and selective estrogen receptor modulators are effective estrogens for the prevention of skin aging in postmenopausal women remains unanswered. However, preliminary data indicate that such treatment may be of benefit for skin aging treatment.