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Noninvasive techniques for the evaluation of skin color.

Taylor S, Westerhof W, Im S, Lim J.; J Am Acad Dermatol. 2006 May;54(5 Suppl 2):S282-90.

ABSTRACT

Visual assessment remains one of the "gold standard" methods of assessing skin color and a number of tools are currently available to reduce the interobserver variability.

Ultraviolet light examination remains a mainstay of the assessment of pigmentary disorders, while polarized light photography is useful for the appraisal of dermal changes, in particular those related to vascularity.

With the introduction of modern instruments, reflectance spectroscopy using tristimulus colorimeters or narrowband spectrophotometers provides a convenient, objective, and reproducible methodology for the evaluation of pigmentation and skin color.

In vivo confocal scanning laser microscopy is a powerful technique for the examination of pigmented lesions, which shows promise in the detection and diagnosis of early melanoma.

Dermoscopy is also useful for the differential diagnosis of benign melanocytic lesions and melanoma, and its use has been shown to significantly improve diagnostic accuracy.