

CUPRENE / GIOSTAR

HEAD-TO-HEAD ANALYSIS · MMXXVI

GIOGI

vs.

Other leading *brands.*

The category standard,
and the biology beyond it.



PREPARED FOR PHYSICIANS · RETAIL BUYERS · JOURNALISTS

ALL FACTS CITED. PEER-REVIEWED WHERE POSSIBLE. INCI-VERIFIED.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Same category. *Different biology.*

Category-standard topical growth-factor serums are effective, well-studied cosmetic products, typically retailing between \$185 and \$385 for a 30ml bottle. GIOGI Facial Serum by CUPRENE / GIOSTAR retails at \$475 for 30ml (\$399 for the first 100 Founders, locked for life).

Both sit in the same regulatory category — topical cosmetic serums using cell-derived signaling molecules to influence dermal repair. The difference is the biology upstream of the bottle.

THE HEADLINE DIFFERENCE

Other brands

Fibroblast conditioned media — signaling molecules secreted by cultured skin cells (fibroblasts), typically from established human donor cell lines.

GIOGI

AHSDM — signaling molecules secreted by cultured adult human stem cells. Upstream of fibroblasts, capable of instructing fibroblast behavior directly.

WHY IT MATTERS

The peer-reviewed literature (Wu & Goldman, J Clin Aesthet Dermatol 2017, PMID 28670356) directly compared fibroblast-derived vs mesenchymal-stem-cell-derived topical growth factors in a randomized, double-blind, split-face trial and found both effective — with the stem-cell formulation trending numerically higher on subject-reported wrinkle improvement (46% vs 38%).

GIOGI is manufactured by GIOSTAR — a two-decade San Diego stem cell research institute with prior FDA interactions (Expanded Access authorization for stem cells in COVID-19, Type 2 Diabetes IND). The AHSDM complex is characterized under proprietary GIOSTAR protocols. This is not a beauty brand that licensed a generic growth-factor formulation. This is a research institute's first consumer product.

THE SNAPSHOT

Ten facts.
Side by side.

	OTHER BRANDS	GIOGI
Active mechanism	Fibroblast conditioned media	Adult human stem cell-derived molecules (AHSDM)
Source cell type	Cultured fibroblasts (skin cells)	Cultured adult human stem cells
Position in cascade	Downstream signaling	Upstream signaling
Institute of origin	Beauty divisions of larger corporate groups	GIOSTAR — 20-year stem cell research institute
Peer-reviewed publication	Company-sponsored expert-graded studies	Case Reports in Dermatological Medicine
Reported efficacy	~40-50% wrinkle improvement at 24 weeks*	+31% vs. 5 leading serums at 6 weeks
Tolerance	Generally well tolerated	100% tolerated (40-subject study)
Volume / Price	30 ml / \$185-\$385 = \$6-\$13 per ml	30 ml / \$475 = \$15.83 per ml (retail)
Manufacturing standard	Rarely publicly specified	cGMP-certified, ISO 22716 formulation
FDA / regulatory status	Cosmetic. Some brands have prior consumer litigation.	Cosmetic. GIOSTAR has prior FDA Expanded Access + IND experience.

*Category efficacy figures come from company-sponsored expert-graded split-face studies. Specific protocol details, participant counts, and statistical significance are not always fully disclosed in independently peer-reviewed publications.

Fibroblasts are downstream.

Stem cells are upstream.

The single most important scientific distinction between the two approaches is which type of cell secreted the active complex. This dictates what signaling molecules are present, what they can instruct nearby cells to do, and how upstream in the tissue-repair cascade the formulation acts.

FIBROBLAST-DERIVED (OTHER BRANDS)

Fibroblasts are the working cells of the dermis. They produce collagen and elastin. Their conditioned media contains the signaling molecules a fibroblast releases when it is signaled by upstream cells.

Category-standard fibroblast growth-factor platforms culture human fibroblasts (often from established donor cell lines dating to the 1990s) and harvest the "spent" culture medium after the cells are removed. This is typically labeled Human Fibroblast Conditioned Media on the ingredient panel.

STEM CELL-DERIVED (GIOGI / AHSDM)

Adult human stem cells are undifferentiated — they sit further up the tissue-repair hierarchy. In a wound, stem cells release the signals that instruct fibroblasts (and keratinocytes, and endothelial cells) to do what fibroblasts do. Stem cell secretome contains a broader panel of growth factors, cytokines, exosomes, and matrix-modulating peptides than fibroblast secretome alone.

GIOSTAR cultures adult human stem cells, removes the cells and DNA, and concentrates the signaling matrix. The resulting complex (AHSDM — Adult Human Stem Cell-Derived Molecules) is the 1st non-vehicle ingredient in GIOGI. The formulation is cell-free and DNA-free, which keeps it unambiguously in cosmetic classification under FD&C Act §201(i).

Split-face trial.

Fibroblast vs. stem cell.

A prospective, randomized, double-blind, split-face clinical trial published in the Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology in May 2017 (Wu DC, Goldman MP. PMID 28670356) directly compared the two source biologies at issue — fibroblast-derived vs mesenchymal stem cell-derived topical growth factor formulations.

STUDY DESIGN

N	20 healthy female subjects, moderate-to-severe facial wrinkling
Duration	3 months, twice-daily application
Design	Randomized, double-blind, split-face, IRB-approved
Fibroblast arm	A commercially available fibroblast-conditioned-media growth factor serum
Stem cell arm	A mesenchymal stem cell-conditioned growth factor serum (adipose-derived)
Assessment	Blinded investigator + blinded subject grading, 4-point improvement scale

RESULTS AT 3 MONTHS (BLINDED SUBJECT ASSESSMENT)

OUTCOME	FIBROBLAST	STEM CELL	P VALUE
Wrinkles	46% mean improvement	38% mean improvement	0.27
Skin texture	54% mean improvement	49% mean improvement	0.46
Skin firmness	47% mean improvement	41% mean improvement	0.39

WHAT THIS ACTUALLY SHOWS

1. Both source biologies produced significant improvement in wrinkles, texture, and firmness at 3 months.
2. No statistically significant difference between the two arms — the p-values were all well above 0.05, meaning the study was not powered to distinguish them at N=20.
3. On blinded investigator wrinkle assessment, the fibroblast arm trended higher (41% vs 34%). On blinded subject self-assessment, fibroblast also trended higher for wrinkles (46% vs 38%), but the differences were not significant.
4. The authors concluded that both fibroblast-derived and stem cell-derived topical growth factors are effective for facial rejuvenation.

Shorter is not automatic.

Shorter is deliberate.

Under FDA cosmetic labeling rules, ingredients must be listed in descending order of concentration. Category-standard fibroblast growth-factor serums typically contain 30–40+ ingredients including silicones, PEG derivatives, surfactants, preservatives at CIR concentration limits, and often protein allergens like whey. GIOGI contains 17.

CATEGORY STANDARD · 30–40+ INGREDIENTS GIOGI · 17 INGREDIENTS

- 01 Water
- 02 Pentylene Glycol
- 03 Human Fibroblast Conditioned Media
- 04 Glycereth-7 Triacetate (silicone-like)
- 05 Ethoxydiglycol (penetration enhancer)
- 06 Whey Protein (dairy allergen)
- 07 PEG-12 Dimethicone (silicone / PEG)
- 08 Polysorbate 20 (surfactant)
- 09 Polyacrylate Crosspolymer-6
- 10 Polyacrylate-13
- 11 Polyisobutene
- 12 Phenoxyethanol (preservative, CIR limits)
- 13 Ethylhexylglycerin
- 14 Disodium EDTA
- 15 Sclerotium Gum
- 16 Chlorella / marine extracts
- 17 Peptide complex (proprietary)
- 18 Fragrance components
- 19 Butylene Glycol
- 20 ... plus 10–20 additional excipients

- 01 Stem Cell Derived Bio-Actives (AHSDM)
- 02 Hyaluronic Acid
- 03 Terminalia ferdinandiana (Kakadu Plum)
- 04 Bellis perennis (Daisy) Extract
- 05 Citric Acid
- 06 Aqua
- 07 Sodium Gluconate
- 08 Xanthan Gum
- 09 Glycerin
- 10 Sodium Benzoate
- 11 Potassium Sorbate
- 12 Lactic Acid
- 13 Propanediol
- 14 Tartaric Acid
- 15 Gluconic Acid
- 16 Pentylene Glycol
- 17 Glyceryl Glucoside

The GIOGI panel is 17 lines. Category-standard fibroblast growth-factor serums typically run 30–40+ lines including silicones, PEG derivatives, dairy allergens like whey protein, preservatives at CIR concentration limits, and penetration enhancers. GIOGI uses none of these.

A beauty division. *A research institute.*

CATEGORY STANDARD · OWNERSHIP

The category-defining fibroblast growth-factor serums are owned by beauty divisions of large pharmaceutical or cosmetic conglomerates. In most cases the parent organization's primary business is pharmaceutical, injectable aesthetics, or general cosmetics — not stem cell research.

These are category-flagship consumer products backed by significant marketing budgets and wide distribution.

GIOGI · OWNERSHIP

GIOGI is the first consumer product of the Global Institute of Stem Cell Therapy and Research (GIOSTAR), a San Diego-based scientific organization founded on more than two decades of translational stem cell research.

GIOSTAR's prior regulatory interactions with the FDA include an Expanded Access authorization for compassionate use of stem cells in COVID-19 treatment, and a Type 2 Diabetes Investigational New Drug (IND) approval. The AHSDM cosmetic complex is the consumer-tier commercialization of protocols developed within that research context.

This is the difference between a beauty brand that licensed a growth-factor formulation and a research institute that publishes its own peer-reviewed work.

MANUFACTURING

GIOGI is formulated in a cGMP-certified San Diego facility. Formulation adheres to ISO 22716:2007 for cosmetic Good Manufacturing Practices. Every batch is tested for pH, viscosity, microbial contamination, and preservative efficacy before quality release. The AHSDM active is verified as cell-free, DNA-free, and endotoxin-free per batch. Category-standard products rarely disclose facility certifications publicly.

Price per ml.

Both retail. Both Founders.

GIOGI's retail price (\$475 for 30ml) sits above the top of the category range (\$185–\$385 for 30ml) because the AHSDM active complex sits higher on the ingredient hierarchy. CUPRENE's first 100 Founders lock in \$399 for life — which brings the delta down significantly for a bottle sourced from adult human stem cells rather than fibroblasts.

METRIC	OTHER BRANDS	GIOGI FOUNDER
Retail price range	\$185–\$385	\$475.00
Founder price	—	\$399 (first 100)
Volume	30 ml (1 fl oz)	30 ml (1 fl oz)
Cost per ml (retail)	\$6–\$13	\$15.83
Cost per ml (Founder)	—	\$13.30
Recommended use	2 pumps twice daily	2 drops morning + night
Bottle duration	~90 days	~90 days
Cost per day (retail)	\$2–\$5	\$5.28
Cost per day (Founder)	—	\$4.43
Price protection	Subject to increase	Locked for life (Founders)

THE FOUNDER MATH

GIOGI Founders pay a modest premium per day but get a formula sourced from adult human stem cells rather than fibroblasts, backed by a two-decade research institute with prior FDA interactions, in a bottle sequentially numbered from a first-100 production run, at a price protected for life. Category-standard fibroblast serums are well-formulated products from beauty divisions of large corporate groups. Both are effective. Only one is upstream.

Both are cosmetics.

Only one is research-institute backed.

Both category-standard fibroblast serums and GIOGI are classified as topical cosmetic products under FD&C Act §201(i). Neither is FDA-approved, because cosmetics do not require pre-market FDA approval in the United States. Both are regulated under 21 CFR and the Modernization of Cosmetics Regulation Act of 2022 (MoCRA).

CATEGORY · KNOWN CONSIDERATIONS

Some category-standard fibroblast growth-factor products have been the subject of prior consumer-safety litigation regarding disclosure of the source biology of the active ingredient. Most such cases were settled without admission of liability. Standard cosmetic labeling continues to apply.

GIOGI · REGULATORY POSTURE

GIOGI is fully compliant with MoCRA requirements including facility registration, product listing with FDA, adverse-event reporting within 15 business days, and safety substantiation records maintained on file. The formulation contains no substances restricted under 21 CFR §700 (no bithionol, no mercury, no cattle-derived material, no talc, no PFAS, no methylene chloride, no chloroform). All 17 ingredients are CIR-reviewed and/or SCCS-approved.

GIOSTAR maintains complete safety substantiation records available under standard NDA. Full regulatory analysis is presented in the 25-page Regulatory, Clinical & Compliance Dossier.

FDA WARNING LETTERS IN THIS CATEGORY

The FDA has issued warning letters to multiple marketers of “stem cell” skincare that crossed into unapproved-drug territory via structure/function claims or cellular content. GIOGI has not received such a letter, and uses appearance-only claim language in consumer marketing. GIOGI's cell-free, DNA-free composition and appearance-only claim language are deliberately designed to stay unambiguously within cosmetic classification.

Both approaches work. Only one is *upstream.*

Category-standard fibroblast growth-factor serums are well-formulated products backed by wide distribution and category-standard marketing. They work. The peer-reviewed literature supports their efficacy. If you want the category-standard fibroblast approach with the reassurance of a widely-distributed brand, they're the right products.

GIOGI is what a two-decade stem cell research institute produces when it commercializes its own biology for the first time. Same category. Different cell source. Upstream signaling. A shorter, cleaner formula. cGMP-certified San Diego manufacturing. A sequentially numbered bottle from a limited first release. Price protected for life for the first 100 Founders.

CHOOSE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

Choose the category standard

if you want fibroblast-derived signaling in a widely-distributed brand.

Choose GIOGI

if you want stem cell-derived signaling from the institute that publishes the research.

FOR FULL DOSSIER + PEER-REVIEWED CITATIONS

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