

The Importance of Aesthetic Medicine in Increased Healthy Longevity and Affluence

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Introduction

Resistance to physical decay and the desire to retain one's youthful appearance is not a new phenomenon in human history. Today, with advancements in medicine and nutrition, combined with an increased awareness of individual healthcare, people live longer, eat better, and enjoy greater health, productivity, and activity. As the population ages and healthy longevity becomes more common, an increasing number of individuals seek methods to enhance their appearance for both personal and professional reasons.

Despite recent efforts to promote diversity and acceptance in societies, beauty and youth continue to be significant determinants of economic security. Additionally, as more countries become increasingly affluent, there has been a corresponding exponential increase in global demand for aesthetic procedures in recent years [1]. The global medical aesthetics market was estimated to be worth \$13.9 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach \$23.5 billion by 2027, growing at a CAGR of 11.0% from 2022 to 2027 [2].

In societies that have achieved a level of material and technological development where survival and comfort require only a small fraction of time, affluent members often seek alternative ways to occupy themselves [3]. This pursuit can include recreational activities and, in many cases, aesthetic procedures.

Living Healthier and Living Longer

Since the mid-twentieth century, it has been well-documented that human populations are living longer, a trend that has extended to many developing countries [4]. As Deaton [5] noted in his book *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality*: "The greatest escape in human history is the escape from poverty and death". The dramatic increases in longevity can be attributed to advancements in medical and public health: controlling infectious diseases with antibiotics, antivirals, and vaccines; improving diet, water, and sanitation; and expanding access to education and pharmaceuticals. From antibiotics to stem-cell therapies, scientific advances have revolutionized the human experience, enhancing not only the length but also the quality of life.

In the field of longevity research, also known as geroscience, scientists are helping us understand how and why we age, with the potential to develop treatments that delay, prevent, or even reverse the effects of aging. Researchers have begun to identify key characteristics of aging. Despite the lack of consensus on the number, hierarchy, or order of importance of these hallmarks, certain processes such as cellular senescence, stem-cell exhaustion, and macromolecular dysfunction have been identified as key components of the aging process. Promising insights from longevity research are now making it possible to develop treatments that may delay, prevent, or even

reverse aging [6]. While the speed of pharmaceutical and biomedical innovation is likely to further increase life expectancy, increased longevity in societies presents its own challenges—particularly, the aging population.

Anti-Aging in Aging Populations

Globally, most developed nations are confronting the challenge of aging populations. As the quality of life improves, affluent societies are experiencing declines in both mortality and fertility rates. Estimates from the United Nations suggest that by 2050, one out of six people in the world will be over 65 (16%), an increase from one in eleven in 2019 (9%) [7]. With increased affluence, citizens in developed nations are able to purchase more anti-aging products and services, driving growth in both product and service markets. Additionally, significant opportunities exist in the aging market, primarily due to its higher disposable income.

The aging population phenomenon, for example, is leading to increased demand for anti-aging products in China. According to Euromonitor, the number of elderly people in China alone is projected to increase by nearly 90 million by 2030 [8]. In 2019, Chinese consumers' growing awareness of aesthetic procedures, coupled with the expanding elderly population, accounted for the largest share of the anti-aging market in the Asia-Pacific region. While studies have noted a rising trend of younger patients seeking aesthetic procedures due to the influence of social media, many people are increasingly interested in aesthetic procedures as they age. They seek to look better, feel younger, and maintain a youthful appearance as they live longer [9].

The Vanishing Taboo of Aesthetic Procedures

Societal attitudes toward aesthetic procedures have changed dramatically over the past few decades [10]. Along with the increased demand

for these procedures, growing interest and awareness has contributed to their mainstream acceptance. A global trend report by Allergan Aesthetics [10] found that 92% of respondents believed aesthetic treatments should be discussed openly without judgment. As a result, discussions about the demand for aesthetic procedures have become increasingly positive. These procedures are now considered a key component of the evolving field of anti-aging medicine, which focuses on the application of knowledge to delay the aging-related deterioration of the body and mind associated with senescence to the end of life. In this anti-aging context, aesthetic procedures are often referred to as “rejuvenative” rather than “transformative.” They are designed to reduce or modify the signs of aging rather than drastically alter natural facial features. These procedures aim to restore an individual's appearance to what it was previously, rather than creating a new look [11].

Anti-Aging in Aesthetic Procedures

The development of anti-aging aesthetic procedures has evolved alongside the expanding medical discourse on anti-aging. Advanced techniques have made these procedures less intimidating, offering less invasive options and faster recovery times. Biotechnological advancements, such as energy-based devices—including new lasers—have enabled the reduction of signs of aging that were once considered irreversible [12]. Today, various energy-based devices are routinely used to address signs of aging such as wrinkles and fine lines. Additionally, neurotoxins and fillers are commonly injected to minimize expression lines and smooth out frown lines.

The Future of Aesthetic Procedures

In affluent societies, the focus of preventive medicine has shifted towards “aging well.” While “aging gracefully” once described those who

chose not to undergo aesthetic procedures as they grew older, this perspective now seems somewhat outdated. Aesthetic procedures, once considered taboo, are now widely accepted. Aging gracefully no longer requires patients to proudly display their wrinkles. Instead, they can embrace aging with confidence by slowing down or even reversing the signs of aging. As the prevalence of aesthetic procedures and anti-aging technologies continues to grow, aging well involves not only maintaining a healthy, active body through diet and exercise but also preserving a youthful appearance.

Conclusion

With the combination of healthy longevity, increasing affluence, and evolving personal aspirations, the medical aesthetic industry is on the brink of exciting changes. Rapid advancements in technology and treatment innovations, along with a growing number of well-informed patients, are driving significant shifts in the practice of medical aesthetics. As humanity continues to push boundaries in various aspects of life, aging well by maintaining a youthful appearance and staying healthy is becoming the new aspirational benchmarks for a generation of men and women worldwide.

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