

Antiaging – a scientific topic or just a social trend?

Oliver P Kreyden

Praxis Methinserhof, Muttenz, Switzerland

Summary

The number of nonsurgical anti-aging procedures have increased in recent years. Reasons for this trend are various: The World Wide Web distributes an immense amount of information throughout the world within seconds, which in turn generates a great demand on information. Active and aggressive medias, which were almost absent 50 years ago, have made our society ambitious; the perception of which is attractive, desirable, and sexy gets globalized. In addition, our lifestyle has changed with the fast-growing offer of leisure activities. Wrinkles, fat deposits, and sun-damaged skin do not fit into our neat society. The increasing demand for aesthetic treatments has prompted many physicians without any knowledge in aesthetic medicine to offer various nonsurgical aesthetic treatments with the danger that aesthetic dermatology stands to lose its scientific relevance. Evidence-based medicine should be applied not only in medical procedures but also in aesthetic dermatology.

Keywords: antiaging, botulinum toxin, social

Nowadays, antiaging is in! This change in society behavior has several reasons. The industrial revolution, particularly the use of computers and the fact of being connected to the whole world through the World Wide Web, the fast-growing offer of leisure activities and the more and more active and aggressive media made our society ambitious. Therefore our leisure time activity also has changed within the last 50 years. We are not content anymore to spend our leisure time visiting friends, having dinner out, or going to the theater. Our small spare time has to be filled with adventure and as much as possible new inputs. In other words, our lifestyle has changed! We live at a bustling time and society teaches us to look fresh, effective, young, and motivated. Fifty years ago we had only radio, newspaper, and cinema news as media influences. Today the media are omnipresent with magazines, television, and even flat screens in public places. They create a perception that only dynamic, young, and good-looking

people can be successful in society. Models of famous couturier get younger and younger and so create a new archetype. Wrinkles, fat deposits, and sun-damaged skin do not fit into our neat social and professional behavior. The time has gone where elderly people have been considered skillful or even wise. While our adult longevity continues to extend, society does not welcome a tired and aged appearance. At least in professional life and more and more in social life, those 50 years of age and older are second string. The future belongs to the youth and therefore it is not surprising that we all want to look fresh, neat, young, dynamic, and successful to survive in the society. Ten years ago, at least in Europe the topic of beauty, wellness, and antiaging was treated stepmotherly in the dermatologic literature. Nowadays, botulinum toxin and the enormous field of fillers, peelings, and other noninvasive procedures have changed this mindset. So-called lunch-time procedures with different methods of adornments are now as common as a visit to the hairdresser. Whereas 10–20 years ago, people wishing to have an esthetic or cosmetic treatment had to address themselves mainly to a plastic surgeon, the pendulum has swung over to noninvasive procedures that are mainly the field of dermatologists. However, the huge demand brings with

Correspondence: Oliver P Kreyden, MD, Consultant for Dermatology, Praxis Methinserhof, Baselstrasse 9. CH –4132 Muttenz, Switzerland, E-mail: praxis@kreyden.ch

Accepted for publication June 25, 2005

it a rising trend where almost every physician who has attended an esthetic conference or workshop offers his/her patient such cosmetic procedures. The danger is immense that esthetic and cosmetic dermatology stands to lose its scientific relevance. Evidence-based medicine should be applied not only in medical procedures but also in esthetic and cosmetic treatments. This implies, however, the knowledge of basic research. Recent advantages in research have led to a better understanding of the molecular processes of the skin influenced by many exogen factors. Doctors should be aware of all these findings and should

be motivated to use our knowledge for the sake of our patients. Only on the background of scientific research does esthetic and cosmetic dermatology have a chance to survive and to confine itself from practice of “quack doctors” with no knowledge. In this issue, a handful of widely accepted experts around the world present the latest news and golden standards in the huge field of skin aging. The main purposes of this issue are to discuss the different aspects of aging and the different modalities to improve aged skin, and to act as a stimulus to physicians to advance the understanding and the use of those important cosmetic modalities.