

Aesthetic Dermatology, The Rising Trend

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Abstract

Aesthetic Dermatology, also known as cosmetic dermatology provides treatment for skin, hair or body that emphasizes on improving an individual's appearance. It is widely conducted to treat conditions such as moles, wrinkles, scars, excess fat, skin discoloration, skin laxity, and cellulite. Benefits such as minimally invasive or non-invasive and relatively less time-consumption with better outcomes has foster the patients to seek these treatments. With soaring demand for these treatments, numerous myths and misconceptions regarding the field of aesthetic dermatology have arisen which need to be addressed. Also, this constantly evolving field with new devices and tools requires extra vigilance, continue medical education and a governing body to have check upon negligent professional activity, if occurs any.

Key words: Aesthetic dermatology; Governing body; Minimally invasive; Myth, Scars; Wrinkles

Aesthetic dermatology is a subspecialty of dermatology that is focused on enhancing looks rather than treating diseases. Few decades ago, this could be practiced in outpatient department with relatively low overhead expenditure and treatment usually included chemical peels, dermal fillers and botulinum toxin.¹ But, with the advent of lasers and energy-based devices, the field has evolved incredibly and require high budget setup. Fractional lasers and high intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) are major breakthroughs which is used for skin rejuvenation and tightening, respectively. HIFU is additionally used to treat localized areas of fat deposits. In injectables, the recent advances include introduction of ultrasound guided injections of dermal fillers to avoid vascular complications and for the precision of treatment.² The modern era of aesthetic dermatology practice has moved from invasive (CO2 lasers and Er:YAG lasers) to non-invasive (Nd:YAG lasers, diode lasers, intense pulse light, and radiofrequency devices) and more recently to minimally invasive (fractional lasers, dermal fillers and botulinum toxin) procedures.³ A study done to see the volumetric trend in aesthetic procedures during a time span from 2001 to 2007 showed maximum increase in soft tissue augmentation (405.0% increase) followed

by botulinum toxin injections (324.4% increase), non-ablative skin rejuvenation (330.7% increase) and ablative procedures (66.8% increase).⁴ The Aesthetic society's aesthetic plastic surgery national databank statistics from 2019 to 2021 showed botulinum toxin injections and dermal fillers was the most frequently performed aesthetic procedures.⁵ However, a very recently published article⁶ regarding botulinum toxin injection resistance due to neutralizing antibody formation warrants attention as its aesthetic use continues to expand. Other than aesthetic indication, botulinum toxin injection also has a first line therapeutic indication for various medical conditions. Therefore, it is essential for practitioners to develop a treatment plan to minimize immunogenicity.

Due to the rising demand for aesthetic procedures, dermatologists cup has received more practice opportunities. Recently, vaginal rejuvenation (VR) has entered this cup. Non-surgical VR through light and energy based devices is a rapidly growing niche. Currently, in our country, there are no laws regarding

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who can practice what. Either dermatologist or gynecologist stands more appropriate to perform VR or this require multidisciplinary approach, need to be clarified.⁷ Likewise, many other procedures like periorbital botulinum toxin injections, blepharoplasty, breast augmentation, and cryolipolysis are crossing over the territories of various specialties. Patient requiring these treatments may benefit from collaborative effort. This need to be well understood by practicing physicians.

Since the trend of aesthetic dermatology keep rising, more and more myths are developing around. These are basically related to safety, efficacy and cost of the procedures and longevity of the result. Therefore, pretreatment non-hurrying consultation is of utmost importance where patients are explained about the treatment and discussed about possible risk. Also, patients should be given realistic expectations regarding results. Since the field of aesthetic dermatology is constantly evolving with new devices and tools, it requires extra vigilance

and the golden rule is to never stop learning and do no harm.

Seeing the explosive demand for aesthetic procedures, and glamour and money that comes with aesthetic practice, more and more dermatologists, especially young dermatologists and freshers have indulged into practice primarily focused on aesthetics.⁸ This has raised a concern whether these dermatologists are able to do justice with their practice because present residency syllabus include minimal aesthetics. Also, if they are aware of heightened obligations they owe to their patients.⁹ Moreover, they are burdened to deal with post procedure complications performed by non-medical professionals entitled aesthetician, skin expert or skin care specialist. Rapidly growing market of aesthetic dermatology centered around profit making is a testament to the collective pursuit of malpractice. Hence, a governing body in Nepal is highly desirable that would impose strict restrictions to stop malpractice and prevent the whole fraternity from suffering.

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