

What men want

Male patients come with their own motivations and physiological needs. **Uma Jeyanathan** explains the approach she adopts for this patient subset

Our focus as an industry, much like my own, has tended to surround skin care for women whilst neglecting the men in our lives. Being a mother, sister, daughter and wife undoubtedly nourishes one's enlightenment as we become older, wiser women, but often taking its toll on our skin. Quite insidiously, men suffer the same skin maturing processes as women.

I have the opportunity to meet many patients in a dental capacity, and this is where I get the chance to ask some poignant questions about skin. Men have rarely entered my clinics requesting advice or aesthetic treatments, but when I approached them about issues surrounding skin, much to my surprise they were very forthcoming with an overwhelming multitude of concerns, curiosities and complaints: large pores, blackheads, acne, shaving bumps, painful folliculitis, frown lines, patches, lumps, bumps, dark circles under the eyes – to name a few.

Physiological differences

To perhaps understand many of these notorious male skin ailments we should explore a couple of the main underpinning physiological processes. The male skin differs from female skin, in that pores are naturally larger and they secrete more sebum (Kim et al, 2013; Luebberding et al, 2013).

This sebum makes men significantly more prone to congestion of the skin and therefore spots and acne, and the male skin is thicker due to higher testosterone levels.

Meanwhile, skin surface cells, which readily exfoliate, can adhere and build up on the skins surface, adding to the higher risk of acne and blemishes (Jacobi et al, 2005).

To counter this, male skin is thicker in



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nature than female skin, acting as a protective barrier. It has a higher amount of lactic acid production, which helps naturally moisturise the skin, and is also nourished with more collagen. Thus, men are genetically built to look younger than women.

Many men, however, tend to neglect this dermatological advantage (Mizukoshi and Akamatsu, 2013), for example with reduced SPF usage, and repeated shaving with poor skin preparation and aftercare. Hence, we see the list of problems men are quietly suffering with.

Emotional differences

When I asked a group of male patients why they would have aesthetic treatments, many of them said to look fresh. Another popular reason was to enhance their self-confidence and to bolster the persona they wanted to reflect in both their professional and personal lives.

Skin treatments can inherently improve both skin stature, as well as personal confidence and self-esteem (Hibler et al, 2016). With increasing importance placed on professional progress and development, our face and the way we present ourselves, be it 'looking fresh'

and emanating confidence, it is no surprise that men are increasingly interested in skin care and aesthetic treatment plans.

With regards to facial aesthetics and beauty, the physical attributes considered conventionally attractive differ between men and women. For example, grey hair or bald heads, 'sparkling' wrinkly eyes and deep forehead lines can be remarkably attractive. It is a primitive notion; older men have survived, and they are wiser and have more to give because of this anthropological victory. Therefore, the treatment for men requires specially tailored thought.

Popular treatments for males

Many men have steered away from invasive treatments, due to the belief that they are labour intensive and protracted in time. However, in my experience, men seem to be open to management plans that are quicker, less invasive and do not show any tell-tale signs of treatment.

The idea of even skin, less ingrown hair, or folliculitis and skin smoothing potential, has gained a lot of interest. Furthermore, this can be delivered through simple, short, regular treatments without an invasive necessity.

A good example of this is a superficial

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chemical peel, which uses a mild acid to gently exfoliate the outer surface of the skin and clean deep into the pores. Using a glycolic peel, collagen can also be stimulated to get an anti-ageing result too. These skin treatments are quick, and can be performed in a lunchtime with minimal side effects. These are all factors that are welcomed by men.

Additionally, I have had great feedback and results from men who have had toxin injection treatment at the glabella lines. Without treatment, these lines can be stubborn and create a look of worry or anger, which is vastly different to fresh, accommodating, confident and professional.

I have also looked to emphasise a holistic approach to skin health to my male patients – keeping in shape, understanding our diet and the care required for body aesthetics. The people that invest in these facets significantly aid the health of their skin in the long term.

The challenging and rewarding aesthetic

management plans I am implementing for my male patients has been inspiring. I am very excited with this important growing wave of interest from men.

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