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Why more Singapore men are turning to plastic surgery

It's not just vanity – they're highly-motivated individuals with a goal in mind.

MAY YIP

The men get it too, obviously. With over a third of patients in most aesthetics practices here being male, getting a little shot of Botox here and a zap of laser there is no longer the prerogative of the fairer sex. In fact, the increasing pressure to look youthful and well-groomed as part of a successful professional image has led more men to seek makeovers as part of a regular regimen of looking – and feeling – good.

“The aesthetic treatment is only the means to an end, which, in many cases, is to advance in one’s career or in the mating game,” says Dr David Loh, best known as a regional trainer for Botox and fillers. Over a decade ago, when Dr Loh was one of the first here to work in aesthetics medicine, less than 10 per cent of his patient list were men.

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Thanks to innovative procedures such as High Definition Liposuction that creates Henry Cavill-type chiselled abs by removing fat surrounding muscle groups, Ultherapy that uses ultrasound to lift and tone skin, and the Liquid Facelift that uses injectables to revitalise the face, more men are taking the plunge for head-to-toe boosts.

Take business owner Sunny Tan, who started seeking aesthetic treatments from Dr Loh about three years ago, mainly “out of curiosity”.

“It is more about packaging yourself,” says Tan, 47, who has tried Botox and filler injections. “The overall package projects confidence and it is important not just for yourself but for the people you work with. No one is born perfect so little adjustments are done to correct those little needs.”

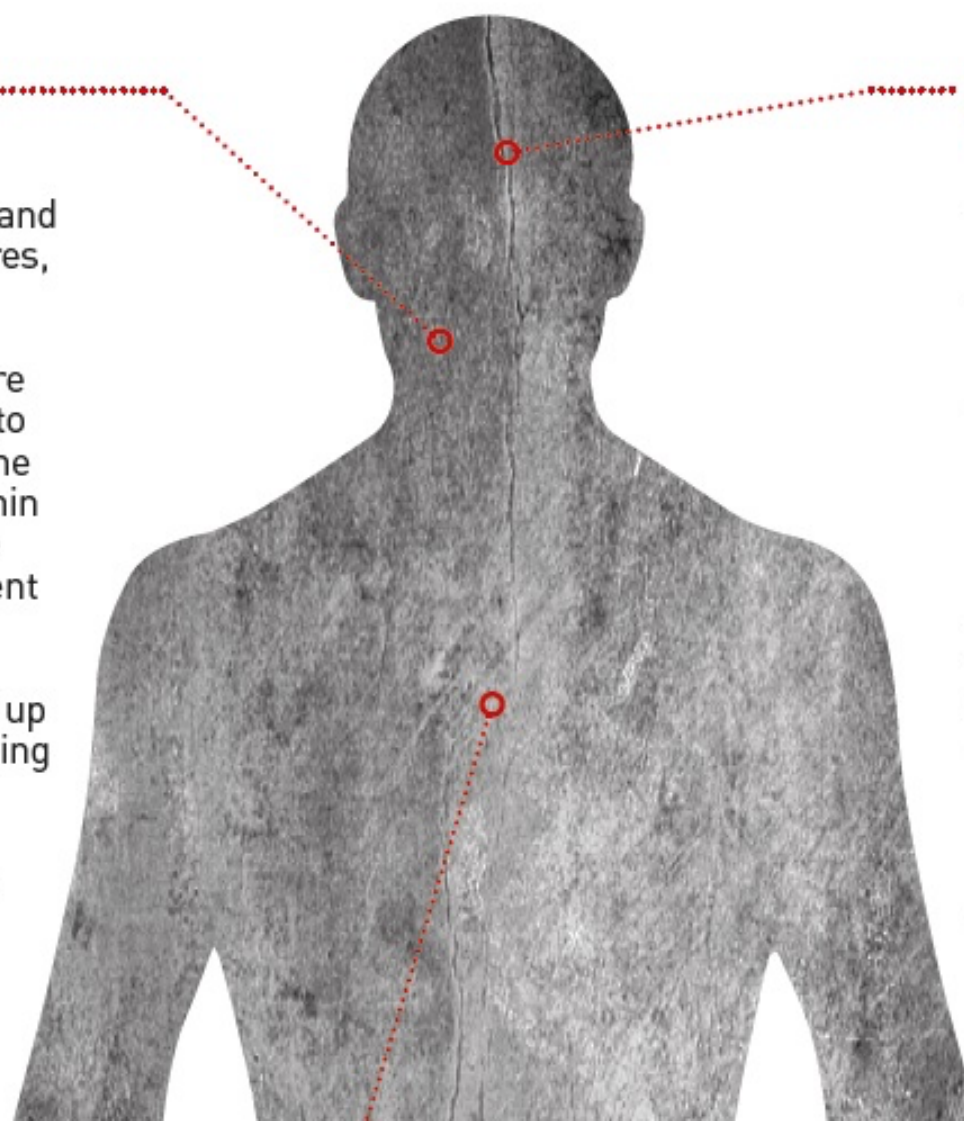
SOME HELP HERE, PLEASE

The trend of more men getting subtle nips, tucks and jabs has been going on for the last six to seven years, observes Dr W.S. Heng of IDS Clinic. Celebrities like Simon Cowell and Gordon Ramsay have admitted to getting Botox shots, while skincare lines dedicated to men are on the rise. As a result, there is increased awareness and acceptance of cosmetic procedures for the male population.

LIQUID FACELIFT

A technique for injecting various dermal fillers to lift and contour facial features, this 30-minute procedure is a non-invasive – albeit more subtle – alternative to a surgical facelift. The forehead, cheeks, chin and even lips can be made more prominent or de-emphasised, or folds made less obvious by propping up the skin in surrounding areas.

*David Loh Surgery,
#01-27 Park House.
Tel: 6733-9114.*



XEOMIN TREATMENT TO REDUCE LINES

Botulinum toxin type A – the active ingredient in Xeomin – acts on nerve endings in muscles to prevent muscle fibres from contracting. By reducing these contractions, Xeomin can temporarily reduce the lines on the forehead between the brows, softening frown lines in just 30 minutes. Unlike Botox, Xeomin is a pure neurotoxin, which means a lower risk of adverse reactions.

*Prive Clinic, #03-03
Palais Renaissance.
Tel: 6737-6639.*



Says Dr Karen Soh, medical director of Prive Clinic: “Younger male patients are realising the importance of early anti-age intervention, while mature patients are staying in the corporate workforce longer and want to look youthful. The constant sharing of photos on social media is also driving pressure on mature men to look as fashionable, well-groomed and fit as their young counterparts.”

While seeking cosmetic treatments isn't exactly a topic one broaches at happy hour with the guys, Singapore men are increasingly receptive to getting a little help for their looks, observes Dr Chan Kok- Weng, chief executive and medical managing director of KW Chan Aesthetic Medical Clinic & Surgery. He notes that the age of his male patients ranges from 30s to 60s.

"I feel men typically don't talk about such matters, but, if asked, they probably will not deny (getting work done)," says Dr Chan, who has seen an increase of about 20 to 25 per cent in the number of male patients he has treated in the past five years.

"Compared to men in other Asian countries, Singaporean men are quite open in seeking aesthetic treatments, with the exception of South Korea and maybe China."

WHAT'S ON THE MENU

Younger men generally opt for treatments that target acne scars as they embark on their first job, or because they are keen to make a good fresh impression at interviews, says Dr Heng. Even those with immaculate skin visit the doctor's clinic for enhancement of their facial contours, such as fillers for nasal re-shaping, jawline masculinisation and chin enhancements.

On the other hand, the older gent aims to look more youthful in order to compete in his workspace, and goes for Botox to erase wrinkles and frown lines, skin tightening procedures, as well as laser procedures for pigmentation problems.

Treatments that involves zero downtime and minimal pain are also big draws for men who want subtle improvements on the down low. Dr Loh has noticed that male patients gravitate towards treatments that do not involve redness of the skin, scars or other tell-tale signs of having had work done.

"For one, men cannot put on makeup to conceal any bruises," explains Dr Loh. "And men hate taking time off work for such reasons. Hence for the face, treatments with no recovery time are always favoured."

Hair is another common area of concern for men, says Manon Allano, managing director of French medspa Estheclinic, which has a branch here specialising in painless Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) treatments in Tras Street. She says that most men seek treatments to remove excessive hair on the body and, conversely, the lack of follicles on the head, as they go bald.

Estheclinic offers a low level laser therapy treatment that delivers cool laser energy to scalp tissue to strengthen hair fibres and reduce hair loss, as well as IPL hair removal for men. Meanwhile, Dr Loh offers hair transplants at his practice performed by his partner, Dr Phoon Yi Shan, to treat male pattern baldness.

Whatever their concerns, men who seek out cosmetic procedures are not merely vain or secretly covet a legion of followers on Instagram. Instead, looking good is just a stepping stone to other successes in life.

"The vast majority of patients who come forward for aesthetic treatments and cosmetic surgery are highly motivated and very driven individuals," says Dr Loh. "Whether it is to find a life partner or to look sharp for career and business prospects, aesthetic treatments and cosmetic surgery give them a sense of empowerment over their own destiny. And very often, they will travel the world to seek out the best treatments and best practitioners."

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