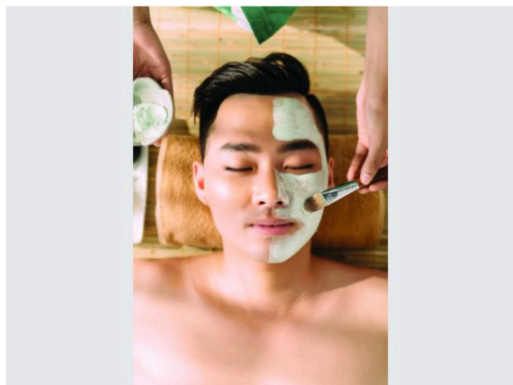


lifestyle

Looking dandy: Aesthetic clinics for guys shed their stigma



(http://www.todayonline.com/sites/default/files/styles/photo_gallery_image_lightbox/public/photos/43_images/26260466.JPG?itok=mka7IFxy)

Acne and acne scar-lightening treatments are highly sought after by men. Photo: istock

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With the popularity of Korean pop culture hitting its peak in Singapore and the rising influence of social media, it doesn't take a trend forecaster to predict that male vanity is on the rise here.

The men's skincare market in Asia is experiencing strong growth. Research firm ApacMarket.com affirms that the men's skincare market is the fastest growing segment of beauty and grooming products in Asia-Pacific, registering a forecasted growth rate of 9 per cent between 2015 and

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According to market research firm Euromonitor, the Asia-Pacific region accounted for 65 per cent of the global spending on men's skincare products in 2013, with China and South Korea leading the market.

After all, hugely popular Korean K-pop stars such as Rain and Lee Minho are the ambassadors for beauty brands, some on an international scale and many more on a local scale in the South Korean market. Thus, it is not surprising that the younger generation of Korean and Japanese men have accepted and embraced, without reservation, the use of skincare and skin-enhancing make-up like BB creams.

Perhaps, what is more surprising is that more Asian men are going one step further and are going for aesthetic treatments such as laser and microdermabrasion. Many male Korean stars are widely known to have undergone aesthetic surgery to correct and change their facial features to fit the current Korean aesthetic ideal of having double eyelids and sharper contours.

Dr Heng Wee Soon, medical doctor at IDS Clinic in Novena, reckons that there has been a kind of "aesthetic awakening among the male population".

"The world is becoming more interconnected, and since the advent of the smartphone and social media, it has become acceptable for men to want to look good," he said. "With the constant exposure to Hollywood celebrities and Korean stars, men also have an idea of their aesthetic ideal to work towards to."

But Singaporean men have been slower to embrace aesthetics treatments, although industry players have recently noticed an upswing in the number of men here seeking such procedures.