



*by Neal R Reisman MD JD
St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital
Baylor College of Medicine*

Thank God for baby boomers. They drive a billion-dollar business as they seek their own fountain of youth. Many believe they do so to remain competitive in the workplace, while others honestly state they pursue all sorts of questionable procedures and schemes in an attempt to look as good as they feel. The business side of age management is clearly profitable, with Age Management Clinics charging large fees for promised virility and youth. But, is it real and reliable as well as safe?

That is the real question. And, are there alternatives readily available to safely slow the effects of aging?

THE BUSINESS SIDE OF ANTI-AGING





Surprise – Diet and Exercise Trump the Other Treatments

We have learned that aging will occur and is genetically controlled, although exercise and appropriate diet can often alter genetic dispositions. The foundations of

a healthy existence and slowing the physical effects of aging start with diet and exercise, a real lifestyle change. That remains unchallenged. The type of recommended diet has changed and has evolved into a low glycemic balanced diet, such as South Beach and The Zone Diet.

The real concern is with additional hormonal supplements such as testosterone or growth hormone. Almost any email connection is inundated by solicitations for hormone purchases and stay-young remedies. Any honest age management clinic should suggest that the client adopt an acceptable level of routine exercise and healthy diet. Lab tests are necessary to confirm the need for additional therapy. The reported results of these tests, however, must be confirmed. A “normal” lab result for the person’s age may be reported as “abnormal” with

The foundations of a healthy existence and slowing the physical effects of aging start with diet and exercise, a real lifestyle change.

suggestions to add expensive and potentially risky products. There are clinics that suggest that a lab result different than a 20-year-old’s result are abnormal and require additional treatment. The 60-year-old with “normal” levels of testosterone and growth hormone, for their age, who are told they need supplements because they should have a level of a younger person, are being deceived. A recent article in *JAMA* by this author suggests that the use of growth hormone for age management is illegal.

Avoid the Quick Fix

In addition to these hormone programs costing thousands of dollars per month, evidence suggests it may be risky to pursue such treatments. It may be a quick fix, but not without significant risk. Is there an alternative to such expensive and questionable treatment plans? I suggest there are simple, safe methods to battle the aging process. I already mentioned two, diet and exercise. Other recommendations include not smoking and sun avoidance.

Plastic Surgery? – “Tweak it”

Plastic surgery can play another role as well. No, not the expensive long recovery choices, but simple, inexpensive user-friendly “tweaks.” The aging process affecting the face results in loss of volume and loss of the elastic quality of the skin. Quick fixes include mild skin peels, usually as an office procedure with 1-3 day complete recovery. Reversal of collagen loss is best accomplished by fillers into areas of deeper lines and folds, again, an office procedure, usually under local anesthesia with a quick recovery. Many injectable fillers, such as Hyalaform and Restylane, are safe and predictable. Fat injections may provide a longer-lasting result with 50% of fat grafts surviving forever. The patient looks like they did when they were younger without added risks. The deep active lines about the face can be safely treated by Botox injections that, appropriately used, keep expressions, but soften deeper lines. Rejuvenation can be less expensive than imagined and one can avoid questionable hormone and supplement care that some believe to be unnecessary and possibly illegal.

Let’s be clear. I am not suggesting that all supplements are spurious, only those intended to reverse normal aging effects in patients without actual deficiencies. Age management care as well as plastic surgery choices can be personalized and fit into the patient’s schedule, without overdoing results or creating unnatural appearances. The business of age management need not be exhaustive or expensive.

Information is the key to appropriate choices. Seek out ethical experienced physicians and ask about alternatives to risky and expensive treatments. Consider all options, especially altering diet and beginning an exercise program. An improved final appearance can be achieved by mentally feeling younger, looking younger and improved overall health.

Dr. Neal R. Reisman, Interim Chief of Plastic Surgery at St. Luke’s Episcopal Hospital and Clinical Professor of Plastic Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine is a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon. Dr. Reisman, born in Philadelphia, graduated from Temple University School of Medicine in 1973, continued his training in Philadelphia, Virginia, Baltimore and Britain. He obtained his law degree in 1993 and is admitted to the Texas Bar specializing in Physician Representation. Dr. Reisman has over 210 presentations and articles both here and abroad on plastic surgery, legal and ethical issues in medicine, and has been recognized as one of Houston and Texas’ “Top Docs” in plastic surgery for the past number of years. He can be reached at dreisman@hotmail.com.

The highest percentage age group is 35-50, clearly the working age group. The most common procedures, by number, are still non-invasive or mini-procedures. Surgical procedures accounted for nearly 19 percent of the total with nonsurgical procedures making up 81 percent of the total. There is still a trend for lesser and keeping up with the aging process. Fillers and Botox lead, as well as hair reduction-removal, and skin care treatments.

Highlights of the ASAPS 2005 Statistics on Cosmetic Surgery

There were nearly 11.5 million surgical and nonsurgical procedures performed in the United States, as reported by the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS). Surgical procedures accounted for nearly 19 percent of the total with nonsurgical procedures making up 81 percent of the total.

From 2004 - 2005, there was a decrease of 4 percent in the total number of cosmetic procedures. Surgical procedures showed an increase of 1 percent with nonsurgical procedures falling by 4 percent.

Since 1997 there has been an increase of 444 percent in the total number of cosmetic procedures. Surgical procedures have increased by 119 percent, nonsurgical procedures by 726 percent.

The top five surgical cosmetic procedures in 2005 were:

1. Lipoplasty (Liposuction) with 455,489 procedures performed, down five percent from last year. Interestingly, 21 percent of these procedures were ultrasound-assisted Lipoplasty (UAL).
2. Breast Augmentation with 364,610 procedures up nine percent from 2004. For the first time, we categorized saline vs. silicone augmentation. 83.4 percent of respondents used the saline device, 16.6 percent the silicone implant.
3. Blepharoplasty (cosmetic eyelid surgery) came in third with 231,467 procedures down 20 percent from 2004.
4. Rhinoplasty (nose reshaping) is the fourth most common procedure with 200,924 procedures performed, an increase of 21 percent over 2004.
5. Abdominoplasty (tummy tuck) reported 169,314 procedures; up 12 percent from 2004.

The top five nonsurgical cosmetic procedures in 2005 were:

1. Botox injections at 3,294,782; up 16 percent from 2004.
 2. Laser hair removal at 1,566,909; up 11 percent from 2004.
 3. Hyaluronic acids (Hylaform, Restylane) at 1,194,222; up 35 percent from 2004.
 4. Microdermabrasion is the fourth most popular procedure with 1,023,931 performed in 2005, a decrease of 7 percent over last year.
 5. Chemical peels accounted for 556,172 procedures in 2005, down 50 percent from 2004.
- Women had nearly 10,500,000 of the total cosmetic procedures performed in 2005 accounting for 91.4 percent of the total, declining 2 percent from 2004.
 - The top five surgical procedures for women were Lipoplasty (liposuction), Breast Augmentation, Blepharoplasty (cosmetic eyelid surgery), and Abdominoplasty (tummy tuck), and Breast Lift.
 - Men had 985,000 procedures, approximately 9 percent of the total, down 15 percent from 2004.
 - The top five procedures for men in 2005 included Lipoplasty (liposuction), Rhinoplasty (nose reshaping), Blepharoplasty (cosmetic eyelid surgery), Male Breast Reduction and Facelift.
 - People between the ages of 35 and 50 had the majority of procedures: 5.3 million and 47 percent of the total. Those between 51 and 64 had 24 percent of the procedures, patient’s between 19 and 34 had 24 percent, those 65 and older had 5 percent and 18 and under accounted for 1.5 percent.