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From swelling to a stroke, minor cosmetic procedures can lead to disasters



If you thought only surgical cosmetic procedures create problems, you are wrong. According to doctors, even non-surgical cosmetic procedures are not foolproof. Unfortunately, they are becoming more mainstream and people are less concerned about the associated risks with them, they say.

Take the case of Poornima, a Mumbai-based banking professional, who landed a modelling offer by chance when she was 31. After a couple of fashion shows, the thought of correcting the signs of ageing such as laugh lines around her mouth and polishing her skin with some laser treatment took over her mind.

She went to a cosmetic surgeon who suggested dermal filler injections for her forehead and around her mouth.

After three days of the procedure, she got small bumps on her face and swelling on her forehead. But the doctor said that was normal and asked her to wait for a couple of days for her skin to return to normal. But even after a month, the bumps did not disappear. The doctor suggested another sitting for the fillers, which actually made things worse. She had to wait for almost two years to do a correction

treatment with the help of another doctor to remove the hardened fillers.

Cosmetic procedures like facial fillers, when incorrectly placed, can cause swelling, pain, lumps beneath the skin, facial scarring and if injected into the retinal artery, can even cause blindness and stroke.



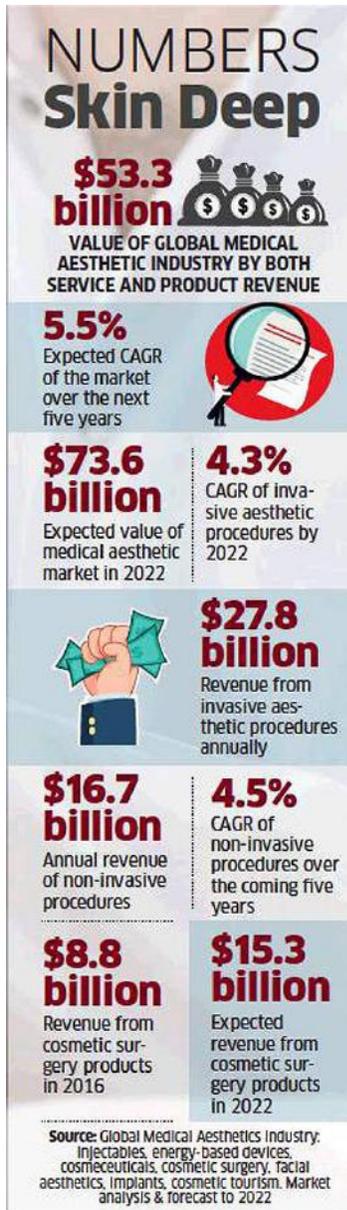
Dr Sunil Vasudev, consultant-dentistry and maxillofacial surgery at Fortis Hospital, Bengaluru, says Botox, dermal fillers, laser, chemical fillers and microdermabrasion are very common these days. “Among these, Botox treatment is a favourite among youngsters,” he says. “This procedure can help minimise the appearance of lines and wrinkles, and can even soften, lighten or remove the wrinkles. This is done by treating certain muscular conditions that works to decrease pore size,smoothen the skin and decrease oil production.”

Youngsters are opting for these more because the complications in non-surgical procedures are less compared to surgical ones. Also, there is no hospitalisation, no general anaesthesia required and can be easily done in the clinic, he says.

“Non-surgical procedures such as dermal fillers are used to augment certain features of the face like the mid-face and lips, Botox injections to contour the face and make the jawline narrower,” says Dr Rajat Gupta, consultant cosmetic and plastic surgeon at Skinnovation Clinics, Delhi. “Botox is also used to achieve nice eyebrow arching by many young women. Silhouette Soft is also becoming very popular, which helps in achieving non-surgical facelift and jawline contouring.”

Dr (Capt) Deepti Dhillon, cosmetologist and dermatologist at Appleskin Clinic, Delhi, says non-surgical procedures are relatively much safer without much downtime; these are 'lunch time procedures' for beauty. "The results can be replicated each time. In case the patient doesn't like the look, it can be easily reversed while surgical procedures come with their own set of complications."

She says the most trending non-surgical cosmetic procedures are fillers for facial feature enhancement and laser toning. The latest rage though are fairness injections like glutathione and body contouring with devices like HIFU and RF (high-intensity focused ultrasound and radiofrequency) for 'no cellulite beach body'.



MORE MEN IN THE LEAGUE NOW

“Till approximately two years back, women were doing much more (of these procedures) than men,” says Gupta. “Since the past two years, however, the number of men undergoing these procedures has increased tremendously. Now, in my practice, more than 40% of patients are men undergoing cosmetic procedures.”

Gupta says one also has to make sure that you treat men and women differently. “In fact, if not done so, men will end up having a feminine face. There is a lot of aesthetic variation we do in improving men’s and women’s faces.”

Women do these procedures often, but with time there is an increase in the number of men having this done as well. More men are getting their cheeks, back, chest and ears lasered for hair removal. There is an increase in the number of men opting for Botox to stop the frown lines on the face and have cryolipolysis for love handles, belly fat and man boobs (or gynaecomastia, a condition in which male breasts are larger than normal) said Dr Chytra V Anand, cosmetic dermatologist and founder of of Kosmoderma Skin and Hair Clinic, Bengaluru.



FILLER FIASCO

Filler injections are not bad if done properly by experienced and board-certified plastic surgeons. But one should use only good quality USFDA-approved fillers. Nowadays, there are a lot of Chinese or cheap fillers available in the Indian market and people get opt for these to save money. This practice can not only prove harmful but can also be dangerous, Gupta says.

Fillers are bad if done by an unqualified person. Always remember to check for the doctor's training and medical licence. Commonly, one can have mild swelling and bruising that lasts up to one week. In very rare cases, there can be vascular incidents but trained experienced doctors can catch this and prevent it, says Anand.

SAFETY SHOULD BE TOP PRIORITY

Many people take these procedures lightly and get it done from just about anyone. Ideally, all these procedures require a sound knowledge of the human anatomy. Boardcertified plastic surgeons are considered to be the best doctors to perform these procedures. So, one should choose his/her treating physician very judiciously, says Gupta.

Dhillon says these are relatively safe treatments, but certain risks may include damage to a blood vessel in case of injectables, leading to complications. Lasers may give a hypo or hyperpigmentation if the parameters are not correct.

"While Botox is considered safe and is the most commonly-used procedure, it may cause very mild side effects such as bruising, headache and weariness. With dermal fillers, the side effects may include discomfort and temporary swelling along with soreness and some bruising. Also, laser treatment may sometimes cause redness and swelling. The side effects can be taken care of by the expert or a qualified surgeon. Laser must be done with a lot of control and complications are in the range of about 30%," explains Vasudev.

It is important to discuss with the patient the benefits and risks before the procedure. The three most important things to be taken care of are proper case selection, precautions to be taken to avoid infections and considering the patient's age before the surgery, says Vasudev.



SURGICAL VS NON-SURGICAL PROCEDURES

Non-surgical procedures are relatively safe compared to surgical procedures, which can have more serious complications with more downtime. Reversing the procedure is not so easy if the patient doesn't like a particular look post surgery. Done by a professional, non-surgical procedures are safe and have satisfying outcomes when it comes to enhancing one's beauty, Dhillon says.

Vasudev explains that surgical procedures are recommended for those who want a dramatic change in their looks. Also, for implants and fat grafting, surgical procedure is used. An individual with wrinkles all over the face would be recommended a surgical treatment, while an individual with moderate and mild wrinkles who wants to achieve soft and smooth skin can always opt for non-surgical treatment. All these procedures are not immediately reversible.

"Only hyaluronic acid fillers can be reversed by using the enzyme hyaluronidase. Botox lasts up to four-six months and wears off; lasers and cryolipo are permanent results," adds Anand.

Slice The Facts

- Non-surgical procedures should be carried out under supervision too

- Discuss with your doctor about the pros and cons
- Your results won't be immediate in some procedures
- Be sure to ask a lot of questions
- Don't think of these procedures as something you need
- Check on the type of equipment
- Ensure it is FDA-approved and refrain from using cheap imitations
- Injectables are to be done by qualified and trained doctors only
- Check on their training and ensure the products used are safe