CORNERING THE MALE AESTHETIC MARKET

Tapping into the growing demand for male aesthetic services requires special attention to the needs and interests of men.

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American spent $12.6 billion on 15.1 million procedures in 2013—up three percent from 2012.

Market data show that men are a fast growing segment of the cosmetic surgery population and have a particular interest in minimally invasive procedures. However, physicians who hope to grow their practices by capitalizing on the growing male market need to make men a priority. Physicians should adopt an all-encompassing gender-specific approach to patient care, treatment, clinic design, staffing, and marketing.

Competitive Market

The medical aesthetic industry is a competitive and growing business with $12.6 billion spent (on 15.1 million procedures) in the US in 2013, up three percent from 2012, according to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery. Unlike the rest of the medical field, medical aesthetics abides by free market principles due to the lack of insurance coverage. Since patients spend their own money on elective treatments, they tend to behave just like consumers in other industries. Patients are educated about treatment options, costs, side effects, and outcomes. Pressured by savvy patients, physicians have to compete on prices, convenience, expertise, and other amenities.

The cash-based medical aesthetic industry has attracted a steady stream of physicians, which may only increase with changes in physician payment due to healthcare reform. The low barrier for entry for providers allows any physician to enter the aesthetic field. Licensed physicians are free to perform any cosmetic procedure that they have been trained to perform.

The aesthetic industry is also rapidly changing. There has been a constant development of new procedures that has expanded the market. Innovative medical devices have allowed physicians to offer minimally invasive cosmetic procedures thereby reducing the demand for surgical procedures. The rapid technological evolution requires aesthetic physicians to invest in the changing technology or otherwise risk being left behind.

Avoid Competition

The aesthetic industry competes for a predominately female patient population. More than 11 million minimally invasive cosmetic procedures were performed on women in 2013, representing 92 percent of all procedures. The female aesthetic market, while not fully mature, is becoming crowded, thereby limiting the prospects for new patients and growth. On the other hand, the male aesthetic market is in its infancy. In 2013, over one million procedures were performed on men, representing only a fraction of the market. Men offer aesthetic physicians the opportunity to capture an uncontested market space.
While men still represent only a fraction of the medical aesthetic market, they are increasingly becoming more cosmetically inclined. Researchers at HSBC have declared that the future of retail is in young, urban males—or as HSBC dubs them, “Yummies.” Affluent, trend-conscious gentlemen already account for 40 percent of luxury fashion sales, growing 14 percent in 2011 compared to eight percent growth in women’s. Men are also shopping more frequently and spend twice as much as men of previous generations. The men’s skincare market has also experienced double digit growth with some analysts predicting a tripling in the size of the market in four years. Maintaining a well-groomed appearance now defines what it is to be ‘a man’ in today’s society. It is only a matter of time before young, affluent, fashionable men seek cosmetic procedures. As millennial “YUMMY” men age, the demand for cosmetic procedures in men will only increase.

WHAT MAKES MEN SO SPECIAL?
To allow the male cosmetic market to reach its potential, physicians need to understand what makes men unique both biologically and behaviorally. A review of the scientific literature regarding facial anatomy documents substantial anatomical differences between genders. The male skull is not only unique in its overall larger size, but also in its unique shape. Men tend to have a large forehead with prominent supraorbital ridges, wide glabella, square orbit, and a prominent protruding mandible. Men have increased skeletal muscle mass, including facial mimetic muscles with less facial subcutaneous fat. Men have a highly vascularized face with increased skin thickness and sebaceous gland activity.

Since facial aging results from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, male behavior is important to consider when targeting men. Men consistently underutilize preventive health care services compared with women, regardless of income or ethnicity, even when reproductive services are accounted for. When men go to the doctor, they tend to be passive patients. They are more likely to have shorter doctor visits, less likely to ask questions, have a lower attention to bodily changes, and tend to visit the doctor later in the course of their condition than women. Men’s poor preventive health behavior also extends to their dermatologic care. Men are less likely to visit a dermatologist. Only 43 percent of patients were male at one academic dermatology department. Men are also less likely to attend a skin cancer screening, perform self-skin exams, use sunscreen, or adopt sun-protective behaviors.

MALE AGING AND BEAUTY
Due to their poor health and sun protective behavior, men age poorly when compared to women. They have more severe facial rhytids except in the perioral area. Men also develop wrinkles at an earlier age. Since men have less subcutaneous fat at all ages, they develop more folds and deep rhytids with prominent volume loss. Despite their accelerated facial aging, not all men are as concerned with the aging process as women. Men display a different set of motivations, concerns, and aesthetic ideals compared with women. Men do not seek perfection, but want to maintain youthful appearance. They are also less specific in their concerns and tend not to focus on a particular area. Men are also harder to treat since there is very little data on beauty ideals in men. Seminars and publications regarding concepts of beauty invariably focus on female beauty. Do attractive men have more masculine or feminine faces? The link between masculinity and attractiveness in male faces is unclear. There are conflicting studies that show both a preference for more masculine and feminine male face. The physician must patiently gauge male patients’ aging and cosmetic goals. Cosmetic treatments do not treat disease, but rather treat aging and beauty. Ultimately, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

MALE MARKETING
Men are a difficult patient population to target and attract to your practice. The poor health behavior exhibited by men is an obstacle that needs to be overcome. Men tend to avoid their doctor, so to attract male cosmetic patients you have to make them a priority to your practice. It is not enough just to offer cosmetic services.
and say, “Of course, we treat men.” The lowest hanging fruit is the male partner of your existing patients. Internal marketing has been the most effective for our practice. Converting the fathers, sons, brothers, and boyfriends of your female patients is the most effective marketing strategy. Promoting male treatments within your practice needs to be all encompassing. Every aspect of your internal marketing should also cater to men. Re-examine your website, brochures, videos, and signage to ensure that it is clear your practice also caters specifically to men. Ensure your staff is comfortable taking about male treatments with your female patients.

External marketing should focus on social media with your activity tailored to each gender. With social media, you can connect with male patients and followers outside of the office. You can build your online image, adding to your reputation and developing a presence that will help attract reluctant male patients. Social media posts targeting men should be more educational and informative. Social media can be an effective tool to enhance awareness and cultural acceptance of cosmetic interventions for men. Do not forget to use social media outlets that are more frequently utilized by men, such as LinkedIn.

**MALE TARGETS**

The ideal male patient population would be baby boomer men. There is no doubt that middle age men are in most need of anti-aging advice and treatment. However, in my experience, baby boomers are the most reluctant to consider cosmetic treatment. The social stigma or machismo is strongest in this generation. The most captive male patient population is young image-conscious men. Millennial Men (ages 20-40) are a prime target. In 2013, I performed cosmetic procedures on over 500 male patients with an average age of 39.3. With younger men, gender conventions are blurring and social taboos of “appropriate gender behavior” are receding. These men understand the importance

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**FEATURES OF THE MALE SKULL**

1. Overall larger size than a woman’s.
2. Large forehead with prominent supraorbital ridges.
3. Wide glabella, square orbit.
4. Prominent, protruding mandible.
5. Increased skeletal muscle mass.
7. Highly vascularized.
8. Increased skin thickness and sebaceous gland activity.

of maintaining their youthful look. They grew up in the era of social media, which pressures them to maintain youthful appearance due to the constant sharing of photos.

CLINIC DESIGN AND STAFF
Marketing to men is only one part of attracting men to your practice. You have to create an environment where men feel comfortable. The comfort should extend beyond their trust in you as a physician. The entire office visit should be designed to ensure a male patient’s comfort. Most cosmetic practices veer much more toward women—both in clinic décor and staffing. If you are serious about attracting men, carving out a male clinic space or waiting room is ideal. Without their own physical clinic space, men may think they are not a priority. While it is unreasonable to expect all aesthetic practices to separate the genders, the importance of creating a practice environment that is not intimidating to men is crucial in attracting new male patients.

Men really want it to be about them. In my practice, the male clinic is located in a connected—but separate—suite of rooms. Having their own clinic space allows us to tailor our internal marketing to them. The male clinic waiting room is stocked with male magazines and displays a video feed of sporting events and financial news. The medical staff should also include at least one male medical assistant. While men generally like seeing female staff members and physicians, men may feel more comfortable talking about cosmetic concerns with another man. Reassurance from another man can help reluctant male patients, in particular.

TALKING TO MEN
Men have largely been ignored by both the scientific community and the medical aesthetics industry. The study of beauty and aging invariably focuses on the female face, while mass-media marketing of aesthetic treatments tends to target women. As a result, men are less cosmetically savvy. They lack basic understanding of available cosmetic procedures. Male patients are often unaware that there are procedures that can address their aging concerns. Because men are less informed about the range of available procedures, they need to be more thoroughly educated about the various options with a full discussion of their individual risks and benefits. They also do not like surprises, so it is important to clearly define the side effects and downtime with any procedure. I find that men are also less tolerant of pain associated with elective cosmetic treatments. Interestingly, women, in general, are more sensitive to painful stimuli than men. Proactive pain control is critical when treating men. Given all these factors, the initial consultation is extremely important when treating male cosmetic patients. You need to first tease out the patient’s aging concerns. The appropriate procedures must then be recommended with a detailed explanation of the risks and benefits. I often spend more time talking to my male patients during the initial consultation.

Men may represent a small proportion of cosmetic patients, but they are a growing market of the cosmetic industry. Men represent an untapped patient population that could serve as an area for growth in aesthetic practices. As the number of male patients seeking treatment of their aging face increases, physicians need to make men a priority of their practices. Available treatments, marketing, clinic design, and staff should reflect a commitment to the male cosmetic patient.

3. The Boston Consulting Group Survey 2013