

First person

All for face value

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We live in a generation where the parameters of aging are constantly getting redefined because of the ever-increasing social pressures of looking younger and more presentable.

Right from childhood, we are trained to look at the other person's eyes while talking, thus drawing attention to the surrounding facial skin. A person may feel internally confident and happy but facial expressions are what the world perceives and interprets. Facial lines not only make a person appear older, but can also convey unintended facial expressions.

The sub-specialty of ophthalmic and facial plastic surgery deals with cosmetic and functional problems of the eyelids, brow and face, and their treatment.

The face is not separate from the eyes. In fact, this is a continuation comprising the oculo-facial continuum. The ophthalmologist, with prior knowledge of lid, orbital and peri-ocular anatomy and the behavioural patterns of surrounding skin and tissues, undergoes specialised training in plastic surgery.

This is, therefore, a merger of an ophthalmic surgeon and a plastic surgeon, with benefits of both streams. For instance, reconstructing the eyelids is not similar to reconstructing any other skin surface, as the lids are dynamic, mobile, complex structures. Similarly, fracture treatment around the eyes requires specific expertise. And as all these structures are close to the eyes, preserving and maintaining vision are paramount.

Cosmetically, patients look for therapy for crows feet (lines around the eyes), nasal lines, peri-oral lines (around the lips), brow lines, forehead lines, neck lines and bands, laughter lines, lip and face contouring, sagging eyelids (ptosis), eyelid bags, face droop and brow sag, amongst other things.

Therapeutic measures can be surgical or non-surgical. Though non-surgical therapy is usually preferred to reduce recuperation time, the choice of therapy is individualised, depending on requirements, age, job profile, skin type, etc of the patient. A trained surgeon has the advantage of choosing from his armamentarium to help patients unlikely to benefit from non-surgical therapies.

Non-surgical injectable therapeutic methods include neuro-modulatory agents like botulinum toxin (Botox) for dynamic wrinkles and fillers (made of a biocompatible collagen-like material) for static wrinkles. Lip augmentation, nose reshaping, cheek augmentation or reduction can also be performed non-surgically, with minimal post-procedural recovery time.

Surgical therapy includes ptosis surgery, blepharoplasties (excess skin removal around eyes), brow lifts, mid-face lifts, 'eyelid bag' removal, etc. While the parameters and requirements for therapies vary, most individuals are pleasantly surprised by the freshness that they can acquire, looks wise, and the difference in perceptions that the change generates both at their home and workplace.

For further details on facial plastic surgery, log on to www.eyecancers.net.

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