



Hobbit's Guide to Aesthetic Medicine

Remember when skin treatment used to be easy? If it is dry, wet it. If it is wet, dry it. And if you do not know what is happening, give a triple whammy cream that contains steroid, antifungal and antibiotic. And if the triple whammy does not work, the chap has got lice.

Now we have aesthetics.

The first thing you have to know about aesthetic medicine is that there is no cure for aesthetic medicine. There is supposedly even an anaesthetist practising this stuff. I suppose you should feel more beautiful after being put to sleep. That is why they call it beauty sleep. Very soon, we may get palliative aesthetic medicine and forensic aesthetics. After we wipe out the beauty parlour business, we will attack the funeral parlours next. Aesthetics can be seamless cradle-to-grave care. And we do not even need clustering to achieve this. Of course clustering and re-clustering is a whole industry by itself – involving scores of management consultants, new uniforms, new logos, more administrative staff and other aesthetic makeovers of healthcare delivery.

Why is aesthetic medicine so popular? Because people want it and pay for it. The Poor will always be with us, and so will The Ugly. Unlike The Good and The Bad – The Good die young, while The Bad make the money. The rest are just ugly. Or at least they think they are ugly.

Which is why we all need aesthetic medicine, just like we need to skewer the idiot who said this stuff was snake oil. We should not give snake oil a bad name because snake oil is actually useful – snake oil sells newspapers.

The next thing you have to know is mesotherapy. The word ‘meso’ actually means “middle”, as in mesoderm, the brother of pachyderm¹. This is opposed to ‘miso’ which actually is rotting soya bean paste. Misotherapy is cheaper than mesotherapy while miso-mesotherapy is usually fatal, unless you happen to squirt some *miso* into your patient’s mouth. The Japanese usually use chopsticks, which is where needle-less mesotherapy is heading. And while you are at it, remember that some folks out there are suggesting we ban off-label use of medical products. That would usually include not using morphine or KCl to kill the guy who uttered snake oil by lethal injection. Use snake oil instead. It may actually work.

Anyway, since the honorable Minister has professed he does not know what mesotherapy is, elements of the elite administrative service, the moribund medical service, the foreign talent in Biopolis as well as the Tai Tai Chapter of the LV Handbag Consortium are working round the clock to discover what mesotherapy is. And after 1.2 billion man- and woman-hours of collaborative research, the astounding preliminary conclusion is that mesotherapy is “*pak-jiam*”² therapy while needle-less mesotherapy is also known as *pak-jiam-less* therapy.

The next thing you have to know is this aesthetic business is growing faster than sub-prime fallouts. The American Society of Plastic

Surgeons reckon that 11 million aesthetic surgeries were performed in the US in 2006, with 302,789 liposuctions and 329,396 breast augmentations (that is, 658,792 breasts involved, give or take a few) being the two most popular cosmetic surgeries. In 2006, 4.1 million Botox procedures were performed to smoothen wrinkles, a 420% increase from the 786,911 done in 2000 in USA. The only thing growing faster than aesthetics is our dengue case numbers and the number of Mas Selamat jokes circulating by SMS. The Hobbit was told by secret sources that the next big thing in aesthetics is the aesthetic haemorrhoidectomy, which is aimed at all the folks out there who want to be perfect a**holes.

And then there are fillers, which are designed to fill your clients' lips, creases, jaws and most importantly, your wallets. They are not to be confused with feelers, which are the folks you send to the Ministry of Health to get an idea of what they are going to regulate after bill itemisation. For the avoidance of doubt, bill itemisation is NOT an aesthetic procedure. Bill itemisation is classified as emergency and experimental reconstructive surgery after last year's resection of the *SMA Guideline on Fees*. So far, the results do not seem too promising. Not to mention that informed consent (by those operated on) is still pending.

We move on to the infamous 11 banned aesthetic procedures which were subsequently clarified to be not banned. This entire turnaround involved the use of 387 tons of clarified butter. If you are confused by this, think of the poor guy in the street and worse, the aesthetic doctors. I heard some guys who invested heavily in such equipment contemplated suicide in the intervening few days before the clarification. They were actually thinking of how to die in an aesthetically pleasing manner, by subjecting oneself to 7,982 laser beams generated by 7,982 obsolete laser machines which were bought just seven weeks ago.

Which brings us to the subject of lasers. Laser is actually an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. Now that you know this useless piece of information, you may also want to know about lifts. Lifts, which can either be Toshiba, Otis or Schindler's, often



include the use of barbed threads, which is different to that of barbed threats. The former is inserted into masochists and the latter is from mothers-in-law (who you think belong to a small and select group which may actually benefit significantly from certain aesthetic procedures including radiation bombardment in a nuclear reactor).

But back to lasers. They come in all shapes and sizes and are used for a variety of uses, including blowing up planets and reading your DVD. In aesthetic medicine, lasers are deemed sexy stuff and there are many courses which teach you to use these complicated and expensive equipment for various purposes, including removing unwanted hair, previously performed with a pair of tweezers that costs \$1.29.

Vacuum therapy, ultrasound and lymphatic draining are some of the ways aesthetic practitioners can help a person slim down. They work in various ways, including dissolving your fat and getting them excreted out. The rationale for this is that most of our brain is fat and to believe this, you need to have a vacuum in the supratentorial region.

But seriously folks, please do not ban aesthetic practices. It is an ugly world out here for doctors trying to earn a living without performing aesthetic procedures. ■

Reference:

- 1 ***Pachyderm – a class of thick-skinned hoofed mammals which includes elephants, rhinoceros, hippopotamus and some healthcare reporters.***
- 2 ***Pak-jiam – Hokkien for injection.***