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# Face value: Why more men are getting Botox

By Deirdre Kelly  
From Saturday's Globe and Mail

A growing number of males are turning to injections and laser treatments in an effort to maintain job security

Like many realtors, 60-year-old Toronto agent Sean had a tough 2009, but it wasn't just a recessionary market and skittish buyers that preoccupied him.

A couple of decades older than many of the brokers in his circle, he felt that his younger colleagues had developed an edge over him when it came to attracting and keeping clients. To compete with them, however, he didn't send out more pamphlets or bombard computer inboxes with e-blasts. Rather, the veteran broker decided to update a more personal calling card - his face - with regular laser treatments.

"It's basically a facelift without the cutting," says Sean, which is not his real name. (For privacy reasons, he preferred that his identity not be disclosed.) "The people at work didn't notice I got anything done. They just noticed that I looked better."

Among the effects of the economic downturn, the growing number of middle-aged and older men undergoing cosmetic enhancements to up their business game has got to be among the least foreseen. But the need to look younger and fresher in today's competitive job market is prompting them to do just that, recent patients say.

Physicians and clinicians specializing in non-invasive surgical procedures corroborate the trend.

"No question there's an increase in men seeking cosmetic treatments as a result of the

recession," says Vera V. Madison, a doctor of aesthetic medicine who estimates that the number of male patients she treats in her discreet midtown Toronto clinic increased over the past year by 40 to 50 per cent.

"It's definitely about wanting to maintain an edge, especially among men in upper-management positions. They tell me that they fear losing their jobs and so they feel a need to do something to keep up."

The most popular outpatient procedures among men are Botox injections, which freeze the facial muscles that create wrinkles from habitual use.

Also in demand are laser treatments that make skin more taut and dermal fillers that restore fullness to faces that have lost elasticity through aging.

"In that regard, men are not that different from women," Madison says. "When they look in the mirror, they don't like to see wrinkles or droops or other kinds of sudden changes in their appearance brought on by the aging process. They want to look youthful."

For many men, though, looking good isn't just about vanity, but about excelling at or even keeping their jobs. Jean Carruthers, the Vancouver-based cosmetic surgeon who pioneered the use of Botox in beauty procedures, cites a male patient, a computer salesman, who says he can chart his sales according to the effectiveness of his treatments.

"His sales are down when he's gone too long between injections," Carruthers says.

"The implication is that looking craggy for men just isn't okay any more. It doesn't say they're working hard. It just says they're tired."

And according to Sean, looking tired or unfit can be the professional kiss of death in today's youth-worshipping marketplace. "After 40, you're perceived as being old, a has-been," the realtor says. "It's especially noticeable in the profession I'm in. There's a perception that when you're older, you're out of date, you're not proficient with computers, you can't learn new tricks. When your colleagues talk about something new, you're left out of the conversation. I found it humiliating, which is why I went to get my face done."

Not wanting plastic surgery, which he describes as "too drastic, too complicated, too obvious," Sean opted for a customized regimen of frequent laser treatments that visibly lift and tighten the face by stimulating collagen production in the body.

The result? People started talking to him more, and his high standing in his agency was maintained. On a non-professional note, he also started dating someone nearly half his age, giving him yet another reason to continue his treatments.

"It does give you an edge in the workplace - there are no buts about it," he says. "I feel like I'm back to competing on a level playing field."

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