

Moving into the 21st century, dramatic shifts in demographics are occurring and reshaping the structure of society. Distribution trends are creating viable opportunities for businesses well positioned to meet the changing needs of the consumer market. The increasing number of aging baby boomers is predicted to have a dramatic impact on the health care system and any other businesses that service their expected needs. The 78 million baby boomers are the driving force behind the economic and social trends in our present society. They are more educated, possess more disposable income than their predecessors, and are open to new ideas and technology. What do baby boomers want? What are their needs? How can estheticians help them? In exploring the possibilities, esthetic professionals will find that they can benefit from providing for baby boomers' needs.

Perception of aging

Aging can be defined as the progressive accumulation of changes in an organism that increases the likelihood of diseases and death. The term "aging" tends to infer a negative connotation and aging individuals often are thought of as somewhat dysfunctional in society. The typical perception of an aging person includes wrinkled, crepey and discolored skin; age spots; and abnormal skin growths. This is compounded by loss of memory; poor vision; poor mental and cognitive processing; bent-over posture; and slow metabolism.

The Business of ANTI-AGING

by pat lam

A poll published in *U.S. News and World Report* on July 29, 1996, indicated that the cosmetic nature of aging is a deep source of anxiety to aging baby boomers. Weight gain was cited as a top priority followed by hair loss, facial wrinkles and gray hair.

Although many aging theories prevail and are disputed by some scientists, there is one notable common theme—these age-related changes are caused by both genetic and environmental factors. The huge amount of research conducted on the prevention and control of age-related diseases has resulted in a new sub-specialty of medicine called *anti-aging medicine*. Society is poised at the threshold of a major paradigm shift in the perception of aging, which can be described as chronological or biological.

Chronological age is the number of years experienced by the organism and cannot be changed. *Biological age* refers to the mental and physical state of the body. The focus of anti-aging medicine is on slowing down or reversing the biological age so that it is possible for a healthy, active 80-year-old man to carry the biological age of a 35-year-old because he possesses the mental alertness and healthy vigor of a younger man.

Unlike conventional medicine that treats the onset of diseases as they occur, in aging, preventive health care treatments are used to *prevent, delay* or even reverse age-related diseases.

Human life span has extended in this century because of advances in medicine, nutrition, sanitation and other interventions. The average life span today is 73 and 79 respectively for men and women, and the predicted life span within the next 20 years is 100 years. This means that there will be a heavy impact on our health care systems as the aging population becomes afflicted with the debilitating diseases of age. Generation X will pay a high price for social support. How can this be prevented? Degenera-



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Editor's note: *Skin Inc.* magazine recommends that skin care professionals obtain specialized training before offering any new services.

that carry health benefits without the undesirable side effects of drugs are compounds such as nutraceuticals, including isoflavones, plant hormone phytochemicals, herbs and homeopathic products.

Cancer

Apart from genetics, most cancer diseases can be avoided by implementing proper lifestyle habits early in life. After skin cancer, prostate and breast cancer are the two most common cancers in men and women respectively. For early detection, attend regular screening tests for breast, prostate and skin cancers. Eliminating smoking can help reduce lung cancer; little or no alcohol will lessen liver cancer; low saturated dietary intake will decrease colon cancer; and using sun protection can help prevent skin cancer.

Diabetes

Chromium is an essential trace mineral that helps insulin to metabolize carbohydrates and reduce blood glucose levels in diabetics. Using chromium supplements such as chromium picolinate have been found to reduce diabetic conditions and simultaneously help reduce cholesterol levels in heart disease patients.

healthier and more active life.

Osteoporosis

Bone mass declines 1% per year in the mid-'30s and bones become porous and brittle, leading to the humped appearance of osteoporosis. Together with sufficient calcium and vitamin D, weight-bearing exercises aid in building up bone mass and strengthening joints. High-risk individuals for osteoporosis are small-boned Caucasian and Asian females. Hormonal replacement therapy, particularly progesterone, also play a key role in building bone mass.

Importance of exercise

Exercise is the simplest and least expensive anti-aging tool. The numerous benefits include:

- Increased lean body mass and reduced body fat
- Improved mental alertness
- Increased endurance, flexibility and coordination
- Reduced stress

Work can be done with a personal trainer in this important area of anti-aging, and better yet, participation in a regular fitness program will provide many of the needed exercise benefits in an anti-aging program.

Hormone replacement therapy

The value of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has become increasingly important in anti-aging research, particularly estrogen and growth hormone therapy.

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