

Professional BEAUTY

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The 20th Anniversary issue:

*Industry comments
and comparisons
two decades on*



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A moment IN TIME

By Dr Adam Sheridan

I suspect that much of the readership of this gleaming publication, now enjoying its 20th year, are too young to truly appreciate the painful truth of clichés. Chief of these is ‘time flies’.

The writer finds it hard to believe that Coolio’s *Gangsta’s Paradise* topped the charts some 20 years ago. Certain unnamed dermatologists are guilty of nodding along to this hit, which has now achieved the status of dusty classic, largely unknown to many of the young nurses at our clinics, some of whom think I am referring to a special operating platform when I mention silverchair...

To further appreciate the speed of change, take a moment to consider the internet is also only now turning 20.

The anniversary of this publication is the perfect time to reflect upon the trends that have come to shape our daily practices, and to cast an eye to the future.

Technology

The rate of technological advancement is exponential. When astounded by recent advances,

I remind myself that the same rate of advancement as has occurred over the past 20 years is likely to repeat, and no doubt accelerate, over the next 20. If the internet which has only just been born is already deeply ingrained in daily life, what further wonders await? It is difficult to predict these, but I will be very surprised if the following fail to materialise:

- DNA profiling and diagnostics through widely accessible tests such as hair pull and mouth swabs. This will guide targeted prevention and treatment for a range of ailments and will raise big issues around patient confidentiality and consent.
- Scientifically proven DNA repair — both topical and systemic.
- Stem cell regeneration as a routine activity.
- Standardised protocols for assessment of the effectiveness of therapies; the gold standard will be 3D skin analysis through high resolution ultrasound, confocal microscopy and related technologies such as DNA analysis.
- Automated patient assessment and treatment suggestion driven by computer algorithms and facial analysis technology.

Networks

As recently as 20 years ago, it was notable if a dermatologist flew to New York to attend a conference and then reported back to an eager audience what they had learned in the wider world. For a time they might even expect to be treated as a mini celebrity for having travelled to acquire knowledge and cultivate international connections. In this way we first learned of a laser that would remove hair, and something called IPL. Will they ever

catch on here, we naively wondered? Colleagues would then go away and cross-check what they had heard in the next monthly hard copy edition of medical journals.

Technology has brought us closer together. Social and professional networks flourish on-line, and the rapid exchange of ideas across the globe is the new norm. This brings great benefits. At our clinics we often seek second opinions from respected colleagues in London, Tokyo and New York.

The ease of information exchange has also bred new challenges. Untested misinformation spreads fast, and quasi-medical fads and fashions can gain traction quickly. Hits and 'sharing' at times outweigh hard scientific evidence in the public mind.

We all serve wider audiences now. I am sure many of you receive, as do we, numerous enquiries from far-flung interstate and overseas individuals and 'fact checkers'. Practice policies must evolve to manage these changing demands and work around issues such as the level of duty of care to unseen individuals communicating across state and international jurisdictions.

Lines must also be drawn regarding communication styles. Are consultations and assessments via email, text, MMS and Facebook accurate and safe? They certainly engender an equivalent duty of care as a face-to-face consultation and the beauty therapist or doctor must bear this in mind when generating their individual policies.

The changing face of Australia

Demographic changes are afoot all around us. Just look across your clinic counter and out the window. In the wonderful melting pot that is Australia, it is important to remain attuned to the changing face of the population.

Changing demographics redefine concepts of beauty. The transition played out in society, and echoed in our popular media and marketing, has been from the supposed ideal of beauty solely embodied by the white Anglo-Saxon protestant (WASP), to inclusion of European, American Jewish and African American looks. Most recently, the 'Pan-Asian' trend which reflects the rise of Latinos in America and Asians in Australasia has been widely embraced.

A further demographic trend is the increase in men attending for care.

To be an effective beauty therapist beyond 2015, it will be crucial to understand and appropriately address the concerns particular to all skin

types, including white, Asian, Indian, Latino and African; and both genders.

More on this in a future issue!

80 is the new 70

Let's finish with another cliché: 'You are only as old as you feel'. The good news is that increasing numbers of people are feeling younger for longer. We can no longer make assumptions regarding an individual's expectations regarding their beauty and health based purely on chronological age.

People are living longer and better and arriving at their 'third life stage' in better shape than ever, and with the energy to match. Those that live well and long are those who are most keen to maintain and improve themselves — and have the time and means to do so.

Gone are the days when a doctor would note a patient was over 70 and frame medical decisions with the patient and family around the unspoken expectation that there were not many good years left. Only just last week I had a patient who was very put out by my telling her not to play tennis for two weeks after her melanoma surgery... she was 91!

So remember not to stereotype your clients. Resist making assumptions regarding their hopes and desires. It is your privileged role to help each individual who trusts you with their health discover the options and choices best suited to them. I wish you all the best in doing so for the next 20 years! ■

Dr Sheridan is a dermatologist and fellow of The Australasian Academy of Facial Plastic Surgery (AAFPS). For more information visit www.sdsl.com.au www.aafps.com.au



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