

Misconceptions about aesthetic procedures and use of tools

🕒 PUBLISHED AUG 8, 2017, 5:00 AM SGT

We take issue with the July 31 article (Cousins who gave up banking for beauty (sector)), in which Novena Global Lifecare Group's co-founder, Mr Terence Loh, was reported as saying: "If you understand aesthetics, most of them are GP doctors - (but) there's actually no specialisation at all required."

First, the assertion that no specialisation is required is a dangerous misconception.

This runs contrary to the Singapore Medical Council Guidelines on Aesthetic Practices for Doctors (2016), which state that many invasive aesthetic procedures should be performed by specialists.

The guidelines allow non-invasive procedures to be done by general practitioners, provided the doctors are suitably trained and have proper certification.

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Second, the assertion that anyone can be taught to use anti-ageing or wellness tools is contrary to current guidelines, and may have a deleterious effect on patient safety.

The use of such tools and treatments requires a thorough medical knowledge of anatomy and physiology, as well as knowledge on the prevention and management of possible complications.

Cases in recent years involving liposuction deaths, and cases of blindness from filler injections show that aesthetic or anti-ageing treatments can go wrong, even in the hands of medical professionals.

Aesthetic and anti-ageing treatments should come under the purview of well-trained medical professionals with appropriate certification in the administration of aesthetic treatments.

Third, the express aim of monetising patient databases is of serious concern, as it compromises patient confidentiality and may contravene the Singapore Medical Council's Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines.

Finally, DNA testing is not clinically indicated for everyone.

If it is offered and done freely without due consideration for each patient's specific individual background and risk, it could very well do more harm than good.

Doctors, unlike commercial entities, have an ethical obligation to act in a patient's best interest.

The active promotion of aesthetics packages and DNA testing, which by themselves carry inherent risks, is clearly not in the best interest of patients.

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