

YOUTH MEANS ENERGY, HOPE, ACTIVITY



BARBARA WALKIEWICZ-CYRAŃSKA, dermatologist, cosmetologist, owner of the Viva Derm clinic, President of the Polish Society for Aesthetic Dermatology, President of the Foundation of Anti-Aging Medicine, talks to “Polish Market.”

PM “Youth is not a time of life, it is a state of mind” - this quote welcomes the user of the website of the Polish Society for Aesthetic Dermatology, of which you are president. This thesis is quite bold, even a bit controversial morally.

This sentence is true. Youth is a state of mind. I have many 30-year-old female patients who, in my view, have a mind-set of a 50-year-old. I also have patients who are in their sixties, but are young. Youth means energy, hope, activity, eagerness to get to know other people and the world,

smile, vitality and friendliness. If we feel old we do not want to do anything, we believe that nothing will go well and that all people are bad. Our physical condition has an influence on how we perceive life. However, our appearance is not the main factor determining whether or not we are young. Women who have turned 40 often come to me and say: “Doctor, I am a 40-year-old woman, but I look old. I do not accept that. Please do something about it.” When I hear a patient say something like this I know that the results of the treatment will be very good. Every visit begins

with handing a mirror to the patient. I ask her to tell me what she does not like about her reflection. The important thing is not how I perceive the patient, but how she sees herself – what she would like to improve to feel well in her own skin. And when the patient has indicated what bothers her I know what can be done to improve the imperfection. My knowledge tells me what to do and this is my role while the patient's role is to define the problem.

PM Do patients always come to you with a specific problem?

No, there is a group of patients, aged between 30 and 40, who say: "Nothing bothers me. I look great and I feel great. But I know that time goes by and I would like you to advise me how to ease the effects of aging." I plan an individual skin revitalization programme for the patients and they very eagerly follow the advice.

PM Let us talk about the Polish Society for Aesthetic Dermatology. It brings together physicians specialized in this discipline. In Warsaw alone, there are around 1,000 clinics offering this kind of treatments. Does the society try to regulate the market? Do you supervise the operation of these clinics?

We do not deal with supervision because we cannot and do not want to put ourselves in the role of an institution which knows it better. The State Sanitary Authority (Sanepid) determines the sanitary conditions that a clinic has to meet, the doctor's professional ethics determines treatment quality and the patient makes the choice. It is bad for the patient to be guided by a low price or aggressive advertisements. At the Foundation of Anti-Aging Medicine, of which I am president, we have set up the Polish Council of Anti-Aging Medicine. Among its members are physicians with other specialities, dealing with broadly understood aesthetic and anti-aging medicine. To become a member of the Council, one needs to meet some basic criteria: have a specific speciality, number of training courses and recommending person. We have started as a group of 18 physicians, now the membership exceeds 100.

PM However, there are people who are not doctors, but perform similar treatments.

And this is a huge problem. It is about beauticians who perform aesthetic medicine treatments. For several years we have taken very active measures to have this situation legally regulated.

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PM You make a distinction between aesthetic medicine and anti-aging medicine. What is the difference and what does anti-aging actually mean?

I myself do not even use the term aesthetic medicine. This term appeared around 20 years ago, but it has become greatly devalued because it started to be used to denote all available aesthetic treatment methods. At present, we prefer to use the term aesthetic dermatology, that is techniques which treat or counteract some changes resulting from the aging process or diseases. In the case of skin, it means counteracting the effects of aging: facial lines, discolouration, a loss of volume, skin laxity and spider veins. In dental practice, it means teeth whitening, alignment and so on. In orthopaedics, it includes injecting hyaluronic acid into knee joints. In gynaecology, there are treatments designed to counteract the aging of the private parts. As you can see, aesthetic treatment has become part of many medical specialities. There are paediatricians who have dealt with it for many years and have done so excellently. But if today a physician first becomes a paediatrician and then, after merely two courses, wants to practice aesthetic medicine, we say no. We do not want in our community people who seek an easy way to earn money and do not have appropriate qualifications.

Anti-aging medicine is definitely a much broader field. It is a branch of medicine based on the knowledge and ability of many medical

specialities. It counteracts the effects of aging. In anti-aging medicine, we rely on genetic tests, laboratory tests, tests for food intolerance and susceptibility to cancer. We determine how a given patient will be aging. Every person has a genetic weak point. Joints, periodontitis, colon cancer, thromboembolism – the problems differ from patient to patient. If we know about the weak point we can tell the patient what medicines they should take, what kind of exercises they should do and that they should control their weight. When there is increased risk of colon cancer I recommend a specific diet and regular colonoscopy after 50 years of age. Hormonal balance is very important in anti-aging medicine because aging is associated with a decline in hormonal function. And here endocrinologists have a significant role to play.

PM It is a very broad field, but you have not mentioned any aesthetic treatments in this context.

Because it is not an aesthetic discipline. It involves examinations by an internist, ophthalmologist, gynaecologist, laboratory tests and genetic tests. We leave aesthetics to dermatologists and plastic surgeons.

PM The International Congress of Aesthetic Dermatology and Anti-Aging Medicine, of which you are the organizer, will be held soon. What can we expect?

For many years the congress has had a regular format. The first day – a Friday – is a commercial day, with lectures where you can mention the commercial names of products and devices. Then, on Saturday and Sunday, we talk about medical problems, applications and scientific research. We have invited Marcin Prokop, a lawyer, psychologist and coach, to take part in the business session on the first day of the congress. He will be talking about personal development, which is indispensable to build a clinic's reputation. Saturday and Sunday, called research days, will be devoted to sessions about treatment techniques with the use of a needle, catheters, threads and the use of high-tech ultrasound and radiofrequency devices. Lectures at the plenary room will be accompanied by workshops, or practical courses in a range of treatment techniques. A grand gala at which Pearls of Aesthetic Dermatology will be awarded is scheduled for Saturday. In this competition, physicians select the best products and devices. We expect around 1,500 doctors to attend the congress and more than 100 exhibitors at the stands. The whole community is looking forward to the event. •