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Cosmetics Laboratory Report - Report Series # 7

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Report Series - # 7

Cosmetics Laboratory Report

Project Team

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About SERC (Sheridan Elder Research Centre)

Through applied research the Sheridan Elder Research Centre (SERC) will identify, develop, test and support implementation of innovative strategies that improve the quality of life for older adults and their families.

1. Wherever possible, older adults participate in the identification of research questions and contribute to the development of research projects at SERC.
2. We conduct applied research from a psychosocial perspective which builds on the strengths of older adults.
3. Our research is intended to directly benefit older adults and their families in their everyday lives. The process of knowledge translation takes our research findings from lab to life.
4. SERC affiliated researchers disseminate research findings to a range of stakeholders through the SERC Research Report Series, research forums, educational events and other means.
5. A multigenerational approach is implicit, and frequently explicit, in our research.
6. To the extent possible our research is linked to and complements academic programs at the Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.

EXAMPLES OF SERC RESEARCH

The Built Environment	Information & Communication Technology (ICT)	Human Communication	Public Policy	Other research interests
- Indoor/Outdoor Design - Graphic Design	- Accessible computing - Age appropriate games	- Hearing/low vision - Vision - Language	- Elder Abuse - Ageism	- Self image/self esteem - Care-giver support

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There exists extensive research examining the connection between physical appearance and self-esteem. Many studies involving older adults up to the age of 75 find congruent results with the aforementioned studies. Much of gerontological research concerns the quality of life of older adults. Considering the connection between physical appearance and self-esteem, it might be interesting to consider whether or not enhancements to physical appearance would result in an increase in self-esteem. Likewise, one can consider whether or not an increase in self-esteem on the basis of physical appearance contributes to a change in the quality of life for the older individual. This study serves as a preliminary pilot research study. The focus is to determine whether or not such a connection exists and consequently if a research study on cosmetic therapy is warranted.

1. Purpose

Research shows a connection between appearance and self-esteem. This connection appears to be evident throughout the lifespan and is not limited to younger adults. Beauty treatments are often used to enhance physical appearance and consequently increase self-esteem. This study sought to determine whether or not beauty treatments, such as manicures, skincare and makeup consultations, resulted in an increase in self-esteem in older adults. Furthermore, it was considered whether or not an increase in self-esteem due to physical appearance would influence an older adult's quality of life.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study was qualitative in nature and intended as a pre-cursor to a potential pilot project. Six working stations were set up in the cosmetics studio. This allowed for the potential of six cosmetic students and six accompanying clients to sign up per day. When clients arrived with their caregivers they were then paired with a cosmetic student who provided the client with a manicure or makeover, but typically both were performed. The student's focus was on heightening the self-esteem of the client through beauty treatments and helpful advice.

2.2 Respondent Sampling

The researchers used flyers to recruit both clients and students. Most clients were recruited from the VON Halton Alzheimer's Services Day Program, which is located at SERC.

2.3 Method

The cosmetics studio pilot was comprised of three-hour sessions occurring over a specified period of ten selected days. Both students and clients were recruited through flyers administered by the researchers. Clients and students signed up for a specific time and date based on their own personal schedules and could participate in as many sessions as needed. Upon arrival, clients were paired up with cosmetic students. The students then discussed with the clients which beauty treatments they would like to

receive, including makeovers, skin consultations, and manicures. After completing the cosmetic session, both clients and students were administered questionnaires in order to obtain feedback about the session

3. Results

Due to the fact that this preliminary pilot was not in fact, a research study, standard research procedures need not apply. Data obtained from the questionnaires was in fact collected yet not analyzed. Researchers were simply looking for a positive consensus from both clients and students as a preliminary pilot research study concerning the cosmetic therapy program. Researchers did evaluate their own observations and consider the preliminary cosmetic pilot to be a success and worth considering for a proper research study.

3.1 Limitations

Given the nature of the study, proper research procedures were not followed. Given that almost all of the clients were recruited from the day program at SERC, there was a lack of a diverse sample. It is difficult to determine whether or not these services would be of value to a wider more generalized sample of the older population. Also, there were often unequal numbers of cosmetic students and clients, resulting in minor problems. Students and clients should in the future be paired directly prior to the session to avoid these issues.

While questionnaires were administered to gather feedback, the questions did not necessarily provide enough information. For instance, clients did not respond directly regarding the session's impact on their self-esteem and quality of life. It would be interesting to consider whether or not the clients felt these sessions contributed to a higher quality of life. In a pilot research study, the researchers would then have to quantify the data collected from these questionnaires. It would also be interesting to consider a follow up feedback questionnaire to determine whether or not the cosmetic session had an impact on the older individual in the long term. However, the preliminary pilot study met its goals and was deemed successful, thereby allowing the possibility of research cosmetic studies to be conducted in the future.

4. Implications for Policy and Research

- Cosmetic procedures (beauty treatments) can increase an older adult's self-esteem based on physical appearance (based on client feedback).
- Both client and student feedback indicated success over the short-term beauty sessions. A longitudinal study could provide valuable information regarding whether or not the enhancements to physical appearance increased self-esteem and quality of life in the long term.
- Collecting feedback information from clients at various intervals (perhaps immediately following the session, then at one week intervals afterwards) could provide a wealth of information regarding a permanent increase in self-esteem and quality of life.

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- This study has marketing implications as well. Most cosmetic products are geared towards young adults; perhaps there is a niche market of older adults who are interested in makeup, skincare, and the like. Makeup companies could consider these research findings when determining both product selection and advertising campaigns.

5. Conclusions

The SERC Cosmetics Laboratory preliminary pilot study was successful in that it helped to determine an area of research that is as of yet, unexplored. Both client and student feedback indicated positive results from the cosmetic sessions. It seems reasonable that a research study using the same premise as this preliminary pilot could be invaluable in the study of older adults and determining factors to enhance quality of life.