

Dr.Mohan Thomas - Cosmetic Surgeon

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While role models like Zeenat Aman and Jane Fonda have proved that one can age gracefully with as much sex appeal, aplomb and energy, there exists a growing market created by those who want to cast aside their nanna cardigans and flaunt their youthful skin. And for all those who want a potion to restore their youth, T.A. Sciences, a New York based supplement manufacturer, seems to have hit the jackpot with a miracle drug, made from a Chinese herb.

The company is reportedly over the moon about its new finding derived from an oriental herb called Astragalus membranaceus. Marketed under the name TA-65, the promoters claim it can transport one back in time to the days of blemish-free skin with a youthful glow. Although the capsule comes at the steep price of \$1,200 to \$4,000 for a six-month supply, depending on the dose, the company's 65-year-old CEO Noel Patton vouches for its cognitive function.

However, Dr Maya Vedamurthy, Consultant Dermatologist, Apollo Hospitals says,

"Reversal of aging can only be achieved through surgery or non surgical procedures like botox and fillers. These techniques

basically reverse the external signs of aging. Slowing down the aging process can be achieved through a combination of medical holistic practices." Speaking of this new miracle drug, she says, "I don't see any of the claims made. They have been supported by double-blind, well-controlled studies. It's just hope in a bottle."

While there is opinion and fact involved in prescribing a product, such as the TA-65, which the manufacturer says can restore people's telomeres — the protective caps

at the end of our DNA, Dr Veda-murthy also cautions, "People should be aware of the safety data of these treatments before attempting them."

Although this „hope in a bottle“ is on the radar of the canapé-nibbling cliques, Dr Rohini Wadh-wani, Medical Director, Skin Essentials, says, "I do believe that certain supplements like CoQ10, Carnosine, fish oil and green tea extract have far more proven properties that can help one lead a healthy life." Offering a glimmer of hope, she says, "Aging is inevitable, but the rate at which we age is not. Using the right supplements can help us lead a more healthy and longer life." Can such youthfulness be achieved by diet? "The typical diet is either seriously lacking many of these vitamins and antioxidants due to a number of reasons. Supplements are essential, however, TA-65 treats just one aspect of aging and there is more to the overall ageing process than just tel-omeres."

The increasing number of anti-aging creams flooding the market that are recommended by leading dermatologists in the country offer similar results to the capsule. Then, why would anyone be interested in such a pocket-pinching drug? Dr Mohan Thomas, Cosmetic Surgeon, Cosmetic Surgery Institute, says, "Cost has no bearing on effectiveness. A wrinkle cream that's more costly may not be more effective than a less-costly product. Moreover, companies import exotic ingredients from the Amazon or from the deep sea and merely advertise these exotic ingredients without any scientific proof of the benefits. The results they promote are only possible in our dreams."

Tips, treats and treatments

Antioxidants, bio-identical hormones, meditation and yoga are some techniques that are useful in slowing down the aging process.

It is important that when using anti-aging creams, a good sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more should be used.

\* Peels: Chemical peels are applied to the top dead layers of the skin. Once the top layers fall off, new cells replace them from beneath. Different peels help in the regeneration of the underlying collagen that tightens the skin and takes care of the fine lines.

\* Laser resurfacing: Laser energy is directed to the superficial layers of the skin this causes collagen formation.

\* Micro dermabrasion: The physician scrubs off the superficial layers of skin, which are dead top layers, this promotes a smoother and younger skin.

\* Botox and fillers: These work by paralysing the muscles causing the fine lines. This is done by injecting botox and is good for 4 to 6 months

The Indian FDA classifies creams and lotions as cosmetics. So these do not undergo rigorous testing the way drugs undergo. So, there's no guarantee that any over-the-counter product will reduce the wrinkles.

Indulge in super foods that aid anti-aging like berries, dry fruits, eggs etc., says Dr Sunita More of American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery.

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