

Hair Power!

BY DR. MARCELO ANTUNES

Love it or hate it, hair is one of the most important factors in one's appearance. Men and women alike spend a great deal of time and effort styling and caring for their hair. And if you don't, you should. Short, long, straight, wavy, curly, thick, fine, dark, light—regardless of the hair you have, you should pay attention to it. Hair is important stuff.

The psychological effect of baldness has a negative impact on the self-esteem and self-image resulting from the combination of hair loss and physical virility from aging. Baldness is the number-one complaint of men about their appearance; it's an insult to attractiveness and youthfulness. Hair restoration tops the list of preferred cosmetic procedures for men that also include liposuction, rhinoplasty and eyelid surgery. The International Society of Hair Restoration Surgery estimates that 50% of men older than 45 and 60% older than 60 have clinical balding. In addition, US News and World Report stated that more than 60% of men report that hair loss or balding has negatively affected their careers. In the corporate world, there's a lot of emphasis on image, and image goes with self-confidence. Those in the public eye, such as sales professionals, lawyers, actors, public figures and politicians, have always been at the forefront of those seeking hair restoration. Now businessmen are seeking solutions to help them succeed in a highly competitive and often unforgiving job market.

But how can you find out

why you are losing your hair? The answer starts by saying that there is no substitute for a thorough medical evaluation by a physician experienced in hair loss and hair restoration. Often times, this requires a team approach. The cause is frequently found to be related to hormone (androgens) levels, which are usually related to a genetic or familial factor. This is the most common cause for hair loss in men and women. There are many treatable causes such as disorders of the thyroid gland, skin and anemia. Likewise, there are many treatment options that, depending on the cause, include medications, lotions and hair transplantation.

Hair transplantation, like everything else in medicine, has gone through significant changes since its introduction. Initially, it created a dense hairline with a "doll's hair" appearance. This gave the procedure a lot of negative press in the 1970s and '80s. However, in the 1990s the procedure evolved to what is now called Follicular Unit Transplantation. Its basic premise is the transfer of the individual hair follicle, one by one, to create a natural hair pattern. The main advantage of the technique, and one of the reasons for its popularity, is the remarkably natural appearance that it provides the patient. The hair is taken from the back of the head, where the follicles are genetically programmed not to fall, and placed on the crown where the patient has lost some or all hair. In most instances, hair loss is progressive for the rest of an individual's lifetime. Any hair restoration process performed should

include planning for this future hair loss, making the results of the hair transplant look good today as well as in the future.

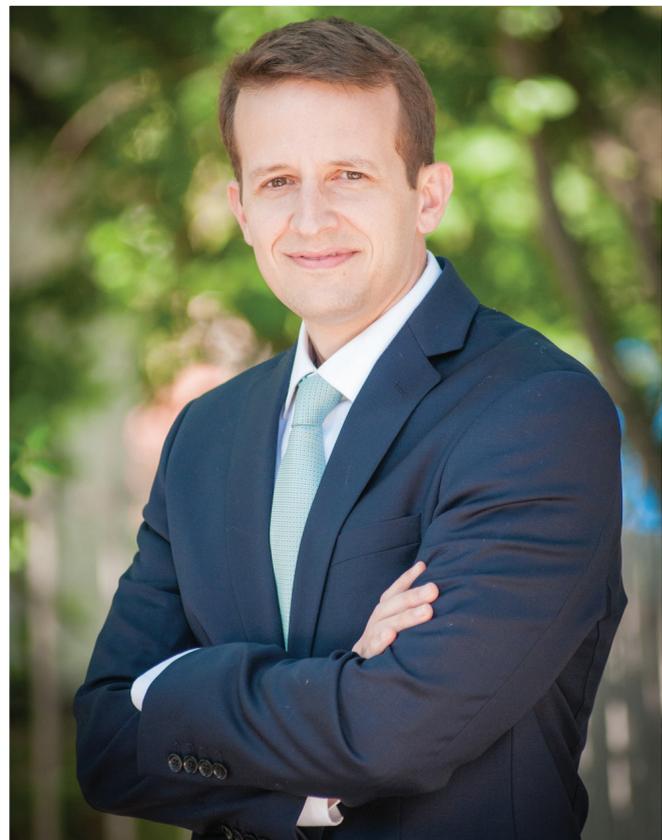
So, if you are bothered by

the thinning of your hair or the receding hairline, remember that there is a lot to be done to help you and your hair. Hair is important stuff.

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