

Preface

This book was written for facial aesthetic surgeons interested in maximizing their face-lift results while minimizing risks and complications. We have tried to provide a tool that can be used to understand and learn the technique of MACS-lifting. Although this procedure appears simple and straightforward, it is a surgical intervention and as such should be performed by fully trained aesthetic surgeons with experience in classical face lifting. The most delicate part of the surgery is the skin handling at the end of the procedure while suturing the skin flap and trying to prevent dog-ear formation. It is here that the basic skills of a well-trained plastic surgeon will prove particularly valuable.

The book is a monograph devoted to one topic in six comprehensive clinical chapters and introduced with an historical overview of face-lift surgery. Although some of our more pragmatic colleagues may choose to skip over this historical material to get to the heart of the technique, we thought it was interesting to include it, because it explains the evolution of thinking over time and places the MACS-lift technique in its proper context. We are aware that this historical recounting is far from complete, but we have tried to mention the landmark contributions that have led to the present state of face-lift surgery.

Face lifting is a young surgery, and we believe that we are at the threshold of an era in which we will see an enormous burgeoning of innovative approaches. Surgical techniques will continue to be influenced by public demand and by the ingenuity of surgeons. Every generation is tempted to speak of “state of the art surgery,” but realistically, we believe that there is still much work to be done to achieve the goal of making face-lift patients really look more youthful, not just different. Current thinking that emphasizes volume rather than traction and vertical vectors instead of oblique or horizontal ones has advanced our quest toward natural facial rejuvenation.

In the history of mankind, the search for knowledge and beauty has always been present. The search for eternal youth and the battle against aging have been waged since the beginning of the human race. Modern face lifting is an example of how technology and science have come together and influenced our approach to aging, but we must realize that we are just at the beginning of this interesting journey.

Following the Introduction, the first few chapters focus on the basic principles, rationales, and applications for the MACS-lift technique. Chapter 1 presents our thoughts about the evolution and basic concepts of this procedure. This is not only our personal vision, but also a description of a trend that began in the last decade with some surgical pioneers and has now evolved into a useful and coherent basic concept that differs substantially from classical face-lift techniques. Two points are key to this thinking and they are both strongly influenced by the patient consulting for rejuvenation procedures himself. First, there is the strong wish to obtain a *natural result* after any kind of procedure without the stigmata of an *operated* face. Second, most patients also wish to *reduce down time* to a minimum without compromising the quality of the result. Minimally invasive surgery is a trend seen in all surgical subspecialties and is welcomed as long as it does not affect the quality of the surgical result. Chapter 2 describes patient selection and how the chosen technique can be adapted to every specific patient situation.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 provide the comprehensive details that underlie the MACS-lift technique in its simple and extended forms as well as the results that can be expected with this approach. Chapter 3, Operative Procedure: Clinical Case Presentation, is conceived as a step-by-step primer, describing and carefully explaining every single step of the surgery as it was photographed, following the case of one patient. Our goal is to make this part so accessible that every plastic surgeon will be able to perform MACS-lifting after studying this chapter. We hope that we have realized this goal.

Chapter 4, Case Examples: Surgical Plans and Operative Results, presents some results of simple and extended MACS-lifts. In this chapter we have purposely included “average results” to give the reader an honest idea of the possibilities of the technique. We fully realize that when performing a few hundred procedures of a certain technique, a dozen results will appear to be more spectacular than the majority of average results. Our goal, however, is not to sell this technique, nor is it to convince other surgeons to use this technique. We only want to share with others our personal positive experience with this procedure and to let them judge for themselves whether it has a role to play in their practices.

Chapter 5, Secondary and Ancillary Procedures, shows more results for specific situations. When choosing an adjunctive procedure, we always look for the simplest and safest option, without compromising the desired result. Face lifting for us is a “customized procedure” that is personalized according to the patient’s wishes and to the preoperative situation. An optimal result is not obtained by just one standardized operation but is always adapted toward the specific needs.

Chapter 6 addresses Problems and Complications, an important topic often overlooked in many textbooks. We can learn from mistakes we have made in the past, and we strongly believe that there is value in communicating these mistakes so others can benefit. Hopefully this information will prevent other surgeons from making the same mistakes and will substantially reduce the slope of any learning curve. We are pleased to observe that after nearly 5 years of performing the MACS-lift technique, we've had an extremely low incidence of serious complications, and only minor adaptations have been needed to solve minor problems. The past 5 years have been an interesting period for us, filled with continuous critical learning and a concentrated effort to maximize the benefits of the procedure without augmenting the risks.

Writing this book was a rewarding and educational experience, and although it occupied most of our limited free time after busy days spent in the operating room, we hope it can be of benefit to our colleagues and their patients.

Acknowledgments

This textbook is the result of a creative process that started nearly 5 years ago and grew through the daily interactions and constructive discussions between the two of us as associates. We are convinced that without this constant mutual critical feedback neither of us would have advanced this technique to its final concept. In a good association the whole is more than the sum of its components, and our partnership is an ongoing source of inspiration and working joy for us.

When considering this work as the result of a long series of chances and opportunities, combined with hard labor, our first thanks should go to the people who trained us. It is from Professor Guido Matton that we learned that only the best may be good enough and that perfectionism isn't as much a quality as it is a requirement. This attitude has perfused the whole of our training, which was conducted by eminent plastic surgeons including Fernando Ortiz Monasterio, Thomas Roberts III, Gary Burget, Stan Monstrey, Françoise Firmin, and many other colleagues who passed on their knowledge to us.

We have worked very hard to make this book a valuable resource for the facial aesthetic plastic surgeon. This would have been impossible without the help and the support of many people. The most direct contribution came from Dr. Ali Pirayesh, who has done a great job in reviewing the literature on facial aesthetic surgery; his efforts are reflected in the opening chapter on the history of facial aesthetic surgery, which helps us understand the exciting contributions that have been made in the past and puts the present situation in the context of the work of our predecessors.

Doctor Katrien Vossaert is the dermatologist working with us in the office. She inspired us to write the section on skin conditioning, as this is a subject in which the dermatologist is much more expert than most plastic surgeons.

Special thanks go to Kurt Drubbel, our “binary artist” from silicoN imageE, a new media company, who has invested tremendous effort and time into translating what we were trying to express into graphics, illustrations, and digital animation on the video. It was a pleasure to work with him—we always felt we were on the same wavelength.

To bring the creative work to a concrete, finished manuscript, we put a lot of pressure on Conny Heugens and Lisa Vanderhaeghen, our two secretaries, who have worked long hours without complaint to help us bring this book to fruition. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

We also thank Christel Wullaert, our scrub nurse and OR manager, for her professional help and her patience during the numerous times that we interrupted a procedure to clean up the operative field or to change gloves for photographs.

Next we want to address special thanks to all of our patients who have been so kind to offer their cooperation for this book by allowing us to publish their pictures.

All of this would not have been possible without the support and input of Karen Berger, President and Publisher of Quality Medical Publishing, Inc. (QMP). She encouraged us to write this monograph, pressed us to deliver it on time, and guided us in the process. A good publisher has to be a visionary to some degree to discover the right authors and a subject that merits publication, but also needs to be a parent who guides the authors with gentle pressure through the publishing process. Associate editor Michelle Berger skillfully organized and monitored the myriad details in assembling a complete manuscript with graphics. Special thanks are also due to Suzanne Wakefield, project manager, for her exceptional editing skills, Susan Trail for her gifted and creative page layouts, Carolyn Reich for burning the midnight oil to see the book’s production through to press time, and all of the other members of the QMP team who worked with us through every stage of the book’s development.

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NOTE: We welcome input from our colleagues. We have opened an online information website, *www.macs-lift.com*, where you can send us your comments and suggestions about this technique to help further advance the art of our specialty.