

## Face-saving new tools

The use of stem cells, nanotechnology, and gamma rays – all are being tapped for the purpose of making you look younger, writes **CHEAH UI-HOON**

**T**ECHNOLOGY continues to pervade the beauty sector, and facials today aren't just about deep-cleansing and pampering the skin, but are intended to stimulate collagen growth too. The use of stem cells, nanotechnology, and gamma rays – all are being tapped for the purpose of making you look younger.

The use of stem cells might still be controversial in other biomedical sectors, but it's now available in aesthetics. At **The Sloane Clinic**, the newest of the new is Stem Cell Mesotherapy for anti-ageing, wrinkle and pigment reduction for the face, as well as scalp rejuvenation for those who want more hair.

"The stem cells used here are injected into the area, and it's possible because they are stem cells harvested from human fat tissue," explains Dr Low Chai Ling.

And you thought your fat was just there to annoy you. It seems that the stem cells harvested from human fat work well in the face. Stem cells in fact have the characteristic of "plasticity" – which means the ability to give rise to all of the different tissues of the human body. Being unspecialised, they can clone themselves without limit, and they can differentiate into many cell types with specific functions.

AAPE (Advanced Adipocyte Protein Extract) is the protein extract from these stem cells. It's a mixture of growth factors that come from stem cells that are harvested from human fat, Dr Low says.

"Because these stem cells for aesthetics aren't harvested from embryos, there aren't ethical issues surrounding its use. Plus, this isn't derived from animals, so it's safer," adds Dr Low.

AAPE uses proteins or "chemical messengers" which signal your cells, teaching them to regenerate, when they're absorbed into the scalp or skin. "What it does is to slow down ageing, and is particularly beneficial for patients with pigmentation, dull and ageing skins," she says.

At **The Sloane Clinic**, the stem cells are mixed and activated only at point of use, as they do not have preservatives, so they can either be injected superficially or applied topically. For the face, for instance, they are injected superficially into various areas all over the face.

The treatment takes 40 minutes and there



**Radical:** AAPE (above) uses proteins or 'chemical messengers' which signal your cells, teaching them to regenerate, when they're absorbed into the scalp or skin, while gamma barrier treatment (right) is suitable for those with sensitive skin

may be mild redness after the procedure, which will fade in 30 minutes or so. "You can wear make-up and continue with normal activities as before," says Dr Low.

Patients can expect an increase in elasticity and skin firmness after a few weeks as collagen levels are boosted. As AAPE also inhibits melanin synthesis, you will also notice a lightening of pigmentation. All for a cool \$980 per session, or \$4,900 for a course of six sessions.

What about safety issues? Dr Low says that the protein extracts from these stem cells (unfortunately, they can't be harvested from your own fat) have been certified safe for use by the CTFA (Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association).