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Permanent Makeup as An Element of a Long-Term Self-Care and Emotional Stability Strategy: The Impact of a Constant Feeling of “I Am Well-Groomed” On Self-Esteem

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Abstract

In the present work, permanent makeup (PM) is considered not within the logic of a short-term cosmetic manipulation, but as a component of a long-term self-care strategy that exerts a stable favorable influence on indicators of psychosocial functioning. The relevance of the chosen topic is determined by the rapid expansion of the global PM market, which by 2024 was estimated at 152.4 million US dollars, with a projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.9 % up to 2032, as confirmed by industry analytical data, as well as an exceptionally high level of client satisfaction reaching 95%. Within the framework of the study, information on market dynamics, the introduction of technical innovations (including proprietary techniques that make it possible to increase the operational speed of procedures by up to 30%) and psychometric outcomes, assessed using validated instruments recognized in aesthetic medicine, such as FACE-Q, is synthesized for the first time. It is shown that the constant sense of being well-groomed formed by PM reduces daily cognitive load and the level of anxiety associated with the need for regular maintenance of appearance, and correlates with a significant improvement in indicators of psychological well-being and social functioning. Special attention is given to the reconstructive potential of PM, including scar camouflage and areola restoration, which demonstrates a pronounced therapeutic effect on body image integration and the stabilization of self-esteem. It is separately emphasized that the durability of positive outcomes is directly determined by adherence to high professional standards (including, in particular, licensing requirements in the USA and the presence of BBP certification), which makes it possible to substantially minimize dermatological risks and associated complications.

Keywords: Permanent makeup; Self-esteem; Quality of life; Psychodermatology; FACE-Q; Emotional stability; Long-term care; Micropigmentation; Scar camouflage; Aesthetic procedures.

Introduction

The contemporary sociocultural landscape, shaped by the dominance of visual media and increasing demands for public representation, constructs for the individual a regime of permanent readiness of outward appearance. This normative framework generates a chronic increase in cognitive and time load associated with maintaining compliance with these expectations. In this context, the daily application of decorative makeup constitutes only a temporary, situational solution that requires stable and substantial resource expenditures and does not eliminate

the very necessity of repetitive actions [6]. Against this background, permanent makeup (PM) shifts from the plane of purely cosmetic enhancement in a short-term perspective to the status of a strategic investment in a stable, reproducible outward appearance. Accordingly, PM begins to function as a key element of a long-term self-care strategy aimed at reducing operational friction and the stressfulness associated with routine care practices.

The fundamental significance of PM lies in transforming appearance-related self-esteem from a category subject

to pronounced diurnal fluctuations and dependent on the execution of temporary procedures into a more stable parameter that is only minimally affected by short-term changes [13]. The formation of a stable visual image that is perceived as neat and well-organized creates prerequisites for a more even emotional background and supports a long-lasting sense of personal efficacy and controllability of one's own presentation in social contexts.

Market indicators additionally reflect the growing trust in permanent aesthetic technologies and make it possible to indirectly assess their perceived value. By 2024, the global permanent makeup market had reached a volume of 152.4 million US dollars, with a projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.9% up to 2032, when its size is estimated to reach 277.8 million US dollars [1]. Geospatial analysis demonstrates the maturity and dominant position of the European segment, which in 2024 accounted for 72.38% of the global market share [1]. This concentration is explained by a well-developed system of professional standards, a high level of investment in research and development, and intensive conference activity that simultaneously promotes the growth of specialist qualifications and consumer awareness. The structure of demand indicates the predominant role of the eyebrow procedure segment, which correlates with the popularity of micropigmentation and its broad public acceptance [1].

Consumer evaluations of the procedure demonstrate an exceptionally high level of satisfaction: according to studies, it reaches 95% [2]. Under strict adherence to sanitary and hygienic regulations and technical protocols, the frequency of infectious complications remains minimal and is estimated at around 0.2% [2, 3]. The steady growth of the market in combination with a high CAGR is interpreted as a convincing indicator of the high psychological and utilitarian significance of the procedure for clients, who are willing to consider PM as a reliable and justified long-term investment in their appearance and the associated subjective well-being.

At the same time, an analysis of the scientific literature devoted to the influence of temporary makeup on self-esteem, perceived competence, and dominance [13] reveals a pronounced deficit of systematized and methodologically rigorous research in the field of permanent aesthetic practices. The validation of the long-term psychosocial impact of PM using standardized patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) is particularly

underrepresented, especially the FACE-Q instruments widely used in aesthetic medicine [15]. An additional methodological gap is the rare integration of analyses of technical innovations — proprietary techniques, increases in operational speed, and formalized professional validation (licensing, victories in international championships, etc.) — into explanatory models of the durability of positive aesthetic and psychological results.

Against this background, a **research objective** is formulated, aimed at assessing the direct relationship between high-quality permanent makeup, performed in strict accordance with international professional standards, and sustainable improvements in indicators of psychological well-being and social functioning, measured using the validated psychometric instrument FACE-Q.

The **scientific novelty** lies in the fact that the proposed analytical approach for the first time explicitly links the professional and technical level of the practitioner (including documented data on licensing in the USA, results of participation in championships, and an increase in work efficiency of up to 30%) with replicable long-term psychosocial outcomes within the methodological framework of aesthetic psychometrics.

As an **authorial hypothesis**, it is proposed that high-quality PM performed by certified and professionally recognized specialists' functions as an effective psychosocial intervention. It is assumed that it provides a statistically and clinically significant, time-stable increase in indicators of psychological well-being and social functioning recorded using FACE-Q, and that these effects exceed in intensity and duration those changes that are achieved solely through daily temporary makeup.

Materials and Methods

The study employed a method of comprehensive data analysis that combines a systematic review of peer-reviewed literature and the synthesis of empirical case data. The body of literature was formed on the basis of publications indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, using standardized inclusion and exclusion criteria, which ensures the representativeness and traceability of the sample. The data obtained in this way were compared with a unique practical dataset provided by a highly qualified practicing permanent makeup specialist. This dataset includes information on proprietary techniques, objectified professional

achievements (prize places and participation in championships), as well as documentary evidence of compliance with US regulatory requirements (licensing and completion of bloodborne pathogens training, BBP certification). These parameters are used to operationalize and verify the criterion of high quality of the procedure, which makes it possible to link psychosocial outcomes not with an abstract notion of PM, but with a specifically standardized level of professional practice.

Critical analysis of the methodology of clinical studies in plastic and aesthetic surgery indicates a systemic problem: a significant proportion of works is characterized by limited internal and external validity, which complicates the extrapolation of conclusions to the broader population. Taking this methodological deficit into account, the emphasis in the present analysis is shifted toward the use of instruments that meet the highest standards of psychometric assessment and are recognized in clinical aesthetic medicine.

To ensure scientific rigor and comparability of results with data from clinical studies in aesthetics, fundamental importance is attached to the use of validated patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs). Central to this system is the FACE-Q instrument, which represents a modular set of scales for assessing the outcomes of aesthetic interventions and has been qualified by the US FDA with the status of MDDT (Medical Device Development Tool). In the context of analyzing the long-term impact of permanent makeup on psychological state, the key components are, in particular, the psychological well-being scale, which assesses the overall level of emotional comfort associated with appearance; the social function scale, which reflects the extent to which appearance influences participation in social interactions and confidence in them; and the satisfaction with outcome scale, which captures the subjective perception of the achieved aesthetic effect. The use of FACE-Q makes it possible to move from fragmented

subjective evaluations of appearance to a standardized assessment of health-related quality of life (QoL, HRQoL), thereby integrating PM into a broader context of medical and psychosocial outcomes. Additionally, the modular structure of FACE-Q performs a screening function, allowing the identification of patients with signs of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) or clearly unrealistic expectations, which is a critically important prerequisite for ethically responsible practice in the field of aesthetic medicine.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of market trends indicates that permanent makeup is steadily consolidating its status as a long-term, highly reliable aesthetic service. The global PM market, estimated in 2024 at 152.4 million US dollars, demonstrates a pronounced potential for expansion to 277.8 million US dollars by 2032 with a supporting compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.9% [1]. Such dynamics indicate that PM is not regarded by consumers as a short-term or opportunistic trend; on the contrary, it is considered a form of capital-intensive but long-term justified investment of financial and time resources in a stable outward appearance.

The key contribution to the global market volume belongs to the European region, which in 2024 accounted for 72.38% of the global share [1]. This geographical dominance reflects the maturity of consumer behavior, a high willingness to invest in permanent aesthetic solutions, and a significant level of trust in the regulatory institutions and professional standards formed in the European context [1]. The projected market growth trajectory, based on industry reports, confirms that the development of the permanent makeup segment is not episodic but rather stable and structural in nature, which additionally strengthens its positioning as an instrument of long-term strategic care for appearance (see Fig.1).

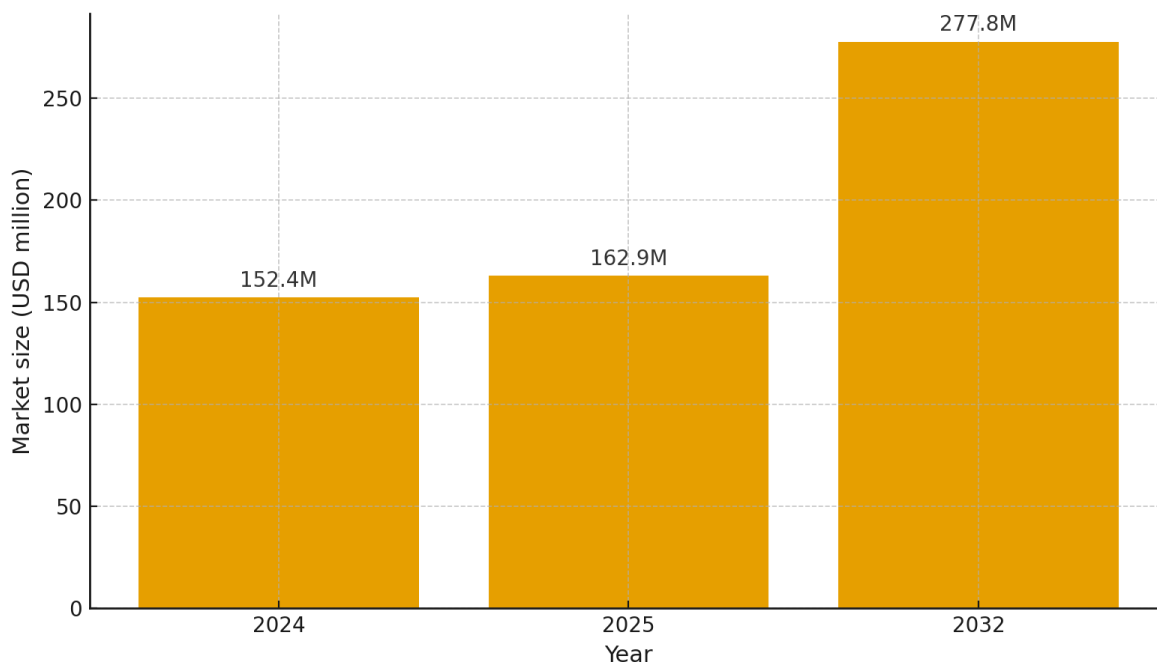


Fig. 1. Forecast for the growth of the global permanent makeup market, 2024-2032 (compiled by the author based on [1]).

One of the most quantifiable effects of permanent makeup is the marked reduction of the operational burden associated with daily preparation of appearance. Individuals who use PM effectively eliminate the need to spend on average 15–30 minutes per day applying makeup to the eyebrow, lip, or eye area [6]. In an annual perspective, this is equivalent to saving approximately 91 to 182 hours, that is, a full-time resource comparable to several working weeks. The release of such a volume of time makes a direct contribution to the subjective sense of improved quality of life and reduced operational stress caused by the routine necessity of maintaining appearance. The reduction of time costs reallocates the individual’s attention from repetitive cosmetic manipulations in favor of more productive or relaxation activities, which amplifies the overall effect on psychological and functional well-

being.

Long-term analysis of financial expenditures shows that PM, despite its relatively high initial costs, may, over a 1–3-year horizon, turn out to be a more economically advantageous solution compared to regular spending on high-quality decorative cosmetics [6]. In this interpretation, permanent makeup is considered a form of capital-intensive yet rational investment with low long-term operating expenses, in which the total costs of maintaining the desired aesthetic result over several years are lower than when relying exclusively on traditional cosmetic products.

Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of time and financial expenditures.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of time and financial costs: Daily makeup vs. Permanent makeup (compiled by the author based on [6]).

Evaluation parameter	Daily makeup (year)	Permanent makeup (period of 1–3 years)
Daily time costs	15–30 minutes	0 minutes
Annual time savings (h)	–	91–182 hours
Financial costs for cosmetics (USD/year)	High (hundreds)	Low (only for touch-up)
Operational efficiency of the practitioner (speed)	Not applicable	Increase in work speed up to 30%

The impact of aesthetic interventions on self-esteem is complex and multicomponent and is substantially modified by the baseline mental state and attitudes toward one's own body [13]. Permanent makeup affects self-esteem primarily through two interrelated psychosocial mechanisms described in studies devoted to aesthetic behavior and appearance perception. For individuals with low self-esteem or a negative cognitive-emotional appraisal of their own appearance (appearance evaluation), PM functions as an instrument for correcting and partially neutralizing subjectively significant defects. Through the stable camouflage of perceived flaws, the need for daily masking actions is reduced, which in turn decreases the intensity of anxiety associated with appearance and with the need to constantly control the visual impression made on others [13].

For clients with initially high self-esteem, permanent makeup functions primarily as a means of enhancing an already positive image, maintaining a stable state of social readiness and increasing the subjective sense of controllability of one's own presentation. Empirical data show that women wearing makeup are more often perceived by others as more physically attractive,

competent, and possessing higher social status, and experimental studies indicate that students with makeup may receive higher grades and demonstrate better cognitive performance compared to those who do not use makeup [14]. In this context, PM provides not episodic but stable effects of positive social perception, minimizing fluctuations associated with the presence or absence of decorative cosmetics on a given day.

The stability of the well-groomed effect acquires key importance for emotional regulation and the maintenance of an integrated body image. The level of satisfaction with PM outcomes recorded in studies, reaching 95% [2], contributes to the consolidation of a stable positive body image and reduces the need for constant external or internal validation of one's own attractiveness. In parallel, the observed increase in demand for functional segments of micropigmentation, such as Lip Blush and Scalp Micropigmentation (SMP), indicates a diversification of the areas of application of permanent makeup and confirms not only its aesthetic but also its applied, functional value in the context of a long-term appearance management strategy (see Fig.2).

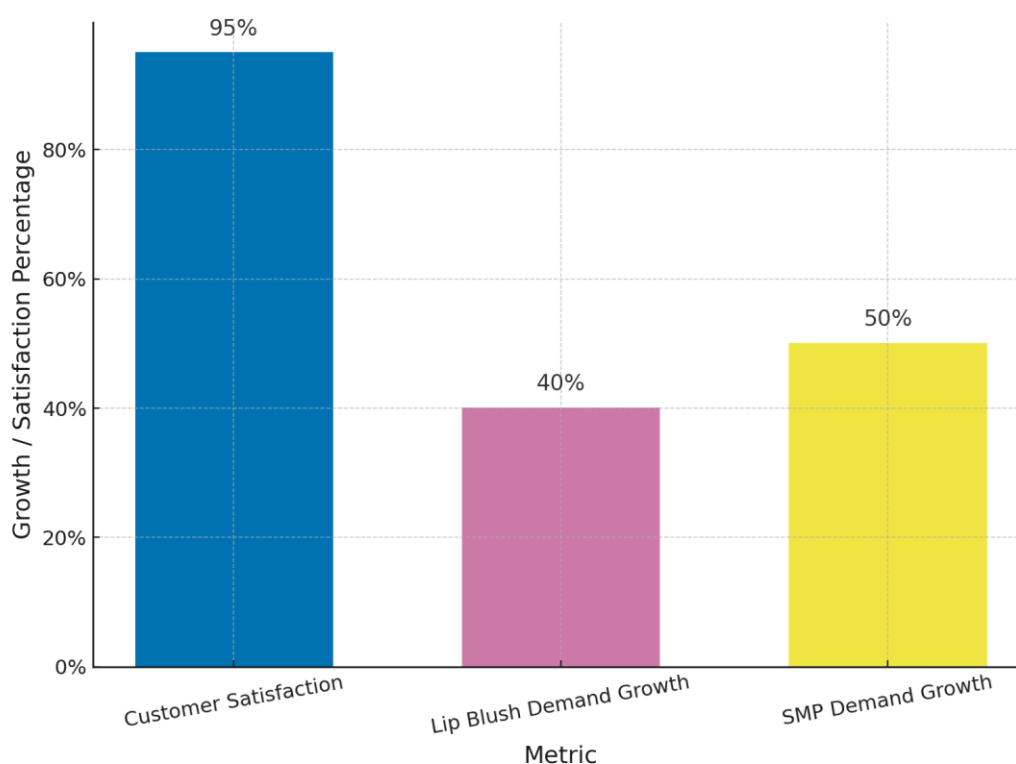


Fig. 2. Customer satisfaction level and demand growth in the functional segments of PM (compiled by the author based on [2]).

Functional micropigmentation, including scar camouflage and areola restoration after mastectomy or traumatic injury, goes beyond the category of purely cosmetic interventions and acquires a pronounced therapeutic status. In this context, reconstructive permanent makeup procedures become a critically important tool for individuals who have experienced significant physical changes, as they exert a direct impact on the restoration of an integrated body image and personal identity. A number of clinical and qualitative studies show that such interventions provide an effect of emotional healing and contribute to the return of a subjective sense of normality [8]. For many patients, this means not merely aesthetic correction but a partial return to a former, more integrated sense of self, especially after surgeries that radically alter bodily appearance [7]. The psychological uplift observed after scar camouflage or areolar tattooing is accompanied by a substantial increase in self-acceptance and a growth in positive attitudes toward one's own body, which acts as a powerful counterbalance to the psychological distress associated with the experienced trauma or illness [7]. Thus, in these clinical scenarios, permanent makeup functions not only as an aesthetic intervention but also as a full-fledged psychosocial modality that contributes to the restoration of mental well-being and the reconfiguration of a disrupted body image.

The long-term stability of the psychological effect of well-groomed appearance directly correlates with the technical quality, durability, and naturalness of the visual result of PM. The technical superiority of the specialist is a necessary, though not the only, condition for the formation of a stable positive outcome. The innovative component is manifested in the use of proprietary, high-precision techniques aimed at maximal naturalness and longevity of the result, for example, in specific techniques for working with the shape and texture of the eyebrows or the interlash space. Careful selection of pigments with high concentration and predictable behavior in tissues contributes to improved pigment retention and reduces the need for frequent touch-up procedures, thereby lowering both the financial and emotional burden on the client [20].

Professional mastery is inextricably linked to safety parameters. Formalized validation of competencies — including obtaining licenses in strictly regulated jurisdictions such as the USA and recognition in the professional community, expressed in particular in victories at specialized championships — serves as an important

indicator that the specialist systematically employs appropriate techniques. This includes the ability to differentially adapt the approach to various skin types, for example, preferring microshading over microblading when working with oily skin, as well as the ability to avoid excessive tissue trauma leading to pigment oversaturation or scar formation [21]. As a result, it is precisely the level of mastery that acts as a critical moderator determining not only the aesthetic expressiveness and longevity of the result but also its degree of safety, which collectively ensures the durability of positive psychological and psychosocial outcomes.

To preserve the objectivity of the analytical approach, it is necessary to critically examine the spectrum of potential risks associated with permanent makeup procedures. Despite the high level of client satisfaction recorded in studies and the extremely low frequency of infectious complications (0.2%) [3], the totality of possible adverse outcomes remains significant as a subject of academic discussion.

Dermatological risks include, first and foremost, allergic reactions to pigments, which in some cases may contain toxic components, as well as threats associated with uncontrolled microbial contamination of dyes [22]. Additionally, cases of papular lesions, nodules, and granulomas in the pigment implantation area have been described [11]. Violation of established aseptic and antiseptic procedures and the use of uncertified materials can provoke destabilization of the skin microbiome and intensification of local inflammatory reactions, which increases the likelihood of unfavorable dermatological outcomes [11].

A separate layer of risks is associated with the professional under-regulation of the field. The absence of unified, strictly standardized requirements for the education and certification of specialists (beyond basic sanitary and hygienic regulations, including in particular completion of BBP training) in the aesthetic medicine industry creates structural vulnerability.¹⁰ Unqualified personnel may employ incorrect or traumatic techniques and use inappropriate protocols for working with different skin types, which leads to aesthetically unsatisfactory results and, consequently, to deterioration in indicators of psychological well-being and client self-esteem. In this regard, the mandatory implementation of standardized levels of competence (such as the QCCP model or

comparable qualification frameworks) [19] is regarded as a critically important instrument for patient protection and for increasing the predictability of outcomes [24].

Psychological and ethical risks are no less significant. Aesthetic interventions, including permanent makeup, potentially attract patients with body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) [17]. In the absence of preliminary psychological screening or the use of validated scales, including FACE-Q modules capable of identifying unrealistic expectations and pronounced fixation on imaginary defects, the likelihood of marked dissatisfaction with the result increases, even when

it meets high technical standards [4]. Ethically and professionally responsible practice in this field presupposes that PM specialists should possess basic knowledge in the psychopathology of appearance, be trained to recognize possible signs of BDD, and, when necessary, refer such clients to specialized clinical and psychotherapeutic professionals, thereby minimizing the risk of exacerbating mental distress.

Table 2 presents a systematization of risks and barriers in permanent makeup practice and defines mitigation measures.

Table 2. Systematization of risks and barriers in permanent makeup practice and minimization measures (compiled by the author based on [3, 4, 10, 20])

Risk category	Specifics (examples)	Minimization measures (professional standards)
Dermatological	Allergic reactions, granulomas, infections (0.2% with compliance with regulations)	Strict adherence to BBP protocols, pigment testing, state licensing
Technical	Low retention, pigment migration, scarring/saturation	Individual selection of technique (shading for oily skin), extensive practitioner experience, use of stable pigments
Professional/ethical	Insufficient training, non-compliance with standards, invalidity of studies	Regulated training, mandatory certification, use of PROMs (FACE-Q)
Psychological	Unrealistic expectations, body dysmorphic disorder (BDD)	Preliminary screening, use of FACE-Q scales to assess psychological and social functioning

Synthetic analysis of psychosocial outcomes and technical quality parameters makes it possible to interpret high-quality permanent makeup as a form of proactive investment in an individual's psychological capital. The stability of the positive aesthetic result, ensured by the combination of professional mastery, formal regulatory validation, and the implementation of innovative techniques, forms a durable sense of self-efficacy. A situation in which outward appearance consistently maintains a state of being well groomed regardless of everyday fluctuations (changes in weather, level of physical activity, fatigue) leads to a weakening of the dependence of self-esteem on contextual factors and reduces the need for constant external validation. The traceable causal chain professionalism – quality of life (QoL) demonstrates that formal confirmation of competencies (licensing, victories at professional championships), in combination with technical excellence (increased operational speed, proprietary techniques that ensure predictability and reproducibility of

results), serves as a guarantor of high accuracy, durability, and safety of procedures. These characteristics emerge as direct predictors of high client satisfaction and, accordingly, a statistically significant improvement in scores on the relevant FACE-Q scales. Taken together, this makes it possible to conclude that professional development and the tightening of standards in the permanent makeup industry exert a direct, measurable, and clinically significant positive influence on the mental health and psychosocial functioning of consumers.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that high-quality permanent makeup should be regarded as a significant, economically and psychosocially effective component of a long-term self-care strategy rather than as a short-term cosmetic enhancement. The working hypothesis of a positive correlation between professionally performed PM and a sustained improvement in quality-of-life

indicators is supported by a set of empirical indicators: an exceptionally high level of client satisfaction reaching 95%, a substantial saving of time resources (up to 182 hours per year due to the refusal of daily makeup application), as well as functional advantages that include reconstructive support and restoration of an integrated body image.

The constant experience at the level of everyday life of a state of being well groomed is transformed into a measurable improvement in indicators of psychological well-being and social functioning. These shifts can be objectified using validated patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) such as FACE-Q, which provide a standardized assessment of results from the patient's perspective and make it possible to interpret PM as an intervention that influences parameters of health-related quality of life. The durability of the identified positive effect is directly dependent on the technical mastery of the practitioner, confirmed by official licensing, strict adherence to sanitary regulations, and the systematic implementation of innovative techniques that optimize both the aesthetics and safety of the procedure.

To further strengthen the aesthetic micropigmentation industry and consolidate long-term positive psychosocial outcomes, it is advisable to formalize several strategic directions of development. First, mandatory standardization of professional training is required: the introduction of regulated, multilevel qualification standards for PM practitioners at the state level (by analogy with QCCP-type models) appears to be a key instrument for reducing risks associated with insufficient theoretical and practical training of specialists. Second, systematic integration of validated psychometric tools such as FACE-Q into clinical and peri-clinical PM practice is necessary, which will make it possible to standardize the assessment of long-term psychosocial outcomes and simultaneously use these scales as a screening tool for identifying clients with signs of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) and unrealistic expectations. Finally, there is a need to deepen the academic research base through the implementation of systematic longitudinal studies using PROMs methodology, aimed at quantitatively assessing the dynamics of the indicators Psychological well-being and Social function before and after PM procedures, taking into account variations in technical approaches and pigment retention parameters. Such a research program will not only clarify the mechanisms of the impact of PM on psychosocial metrics but also strengthen its status as a clinically and

socially significant tool for managing quality of life.

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