

Poll: American Women Have Tougher Time With Aging

Aging is a concern for many Americans, particularly its impact on health, but men seem to have an easier time dealing with the hallmarks of passing years than women, according to a new survey.

The national poll of 2,000 U.S. adults found that nearly 90 percent of people think women are under more pressure to look younger than men are. Men are also considered old about five years later than women, and sexier at an older age.

While gray hair was thought to make men look distinguished, on women it was associated with being old. And the age when women were thought to be the most attractive was 30, compared with 34 for men.

“The survey definitely shows that aging, when we are talking about appearance, is a real emotional touch point for both men and women, no matter whether they are 20, 40, 60,” said Kristin Perrotta, the executive editor of Allure magazine, which commissioned the poll.

“People overwhelming said they were concerned about the effects of aging. They were concerned about how it would affect their attractiveness to the opposite sex and particularly with women, how aging would affect their career.”

Forty-two percent of women aged 50-59 years old said they felt they needed to look young to be successful at work, nearly double the number of men, but overall men and women thought that gender played a larger role in workplace discrimination than age.

Looking Younger

Although aging is a concern for both sexes, about 60 percent of men and women said they thought they looked younger than other people their own age, and a similar number of both sexes said sex gets better with age.

Nearly 70 percent of African American women said they are not concerned about the signs of aging at all, more than any other race.

“People did overwhelmingly have a much more positive view towards aging and toward themselves and their look as they grew older,” Perrotta explained.

When asked to name celebrities who have aged well, actor George Clooney was by far the top choice among both sexes and all ethnic groups, ahead of Sean Connery, former U.S. President Bill Clinton and actors Brad Pitt and Richard Gere.

The top choice among women was less clear cut, but actresses Meryl Streep, Jamie Lee Curtis and Julia Roberts all ranked high.

“Leading men in Hollywood, they are portrayed as sex symbols well into their 70s. Sean Connery is a perfect example,” said Perrotta. “Unfortunately, although we do have many female stars who are continuing to grab major roles as they get older, they are less likely to be portrayed as a sex symbol.”

Five percent of people questioned in the poll said they have had plastic surgery or injections such as Botox to fight the signs of aging. Forty-two percent of women and 18 percent of men said they would consider it in the future.

One in three people who have had injections or plastic surgery have kept it a secret.

“As public as plastic surgery has become in our culture, it is still on a personal level, still private,” said Perrotta.

“Most people who did have Botox or plastic surgery said they

were least likely to tell their spouse, girlfriend, boyfriend or best friend."

The online survey by Penn Schoen Berland has a margin of error of plus or minus three percent.