

# Minimally Invasive Face Lifting and Lipofilling

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## INTRODUCTION

Facial aging processes still represent 1 of the main reasons leading patients to seek surgical correction. Face lift has always been employed as the technique of choice to restore face skin tension and reduce skin folds and wrinkles. Plastic surgeons have gradually moved toward less and less invasive techniques through the years. The minimally invasive face lift is the result of this trend. Autologous fat graft has played an increasingly important role in the last decades, its use showing very satisfying results in volume restoring and tissues regeneration.<sup>1-5</sup> Because facial aging is due both to tissues relaxation and to bone and facial fat absorption, the above mentioned techniques can be associated to improve the surgical results. A 6-year experience in this practice is reported and described.

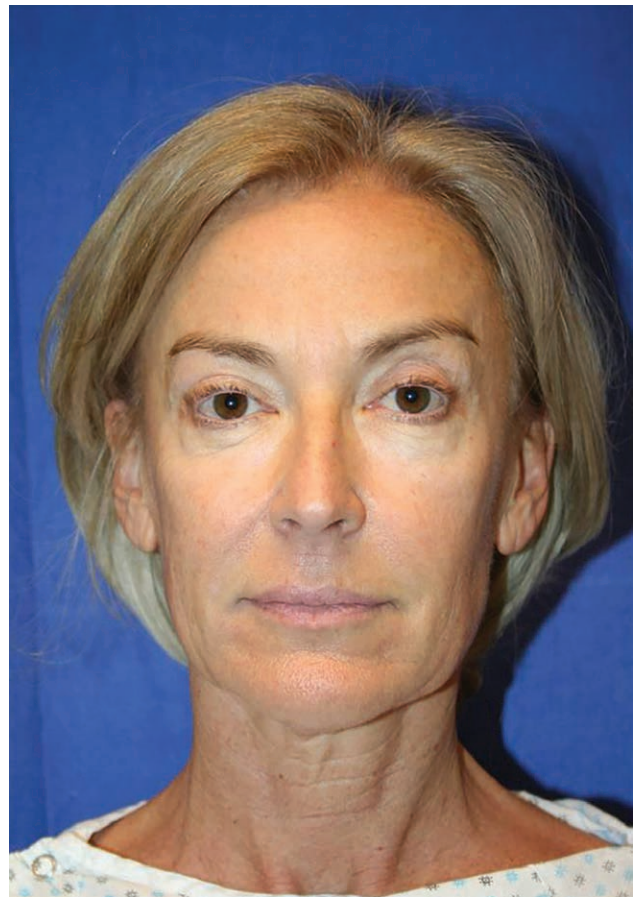
## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the past 6 years, 148 patients came to our practice complaining of facial aging: 14 men and 134 women, between 37 and 70 years old. The patients were evaluated carefully preoperatively: when only facial skin ptosis was observed, a minimally invasive face lift was planned and performed. When a certain degree of bone resorption and facial dystrophy was assessed, autologous fat graft was performed along with the face lift; 62 patients underwent mini invasive face lift only, and 86 patients were also treated with autologous fat graft. All the patients were operated by the same surgeon and employing the same technique.

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## RESULTS

Facial skin tension and volume restoring were achieved in all patients treated (Figs. 1, 2). Patients' satisfaction was evaluated postoperatively 6–12 months after surgery with excellent satisfaction both of surgeon and patient. The mean score recorded was 9 of 10. Postoperative complications included 3 cases of hematoma and 1 case of salivary



**Fig. 1.** Preoperative image of patient submitted to minimally invasive face lift together with autologous fat grafting.

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**Fig. 2.** Postoperative image of patient submitted to minimally invasive face lift together with autologous fat grafting. Fat grafting allows the surgeon to obtain volume restoration after tissue ptosis correction.

fistula, and 4 cases of hypertrophic scars needing surgical revision. Postoperative recovery period lasted 10–20 days.

### DISCUSSION

When compared with more invasive face lift techniques reported by other authors, our experience with the mini invasive technique showed a lower rate of

complications, a shorter operation, a shorter postoperative recovery period, and the same degree of satisfaction. Autologous fat graft significantly improved the cosmetic result when indicated.

### CONCLUSIONS

Mini invasive face lift can be considered the surgical technique of choice for patients with facial aging. The use of autologous fat graft can importantly improve the cosmetic results in terms of facial volume restoration and tissues quality.

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