

Beyond Venus and Mars: Examining gender-related differences in facial aging through the analysis of artworks

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Background

Aging is a process associated with changes in physical appearance. Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn was the greatest Dutch artist and one of the leading painters of the 17th century. Osman Hamdi Bey was a pioneer of Ottoman art. Both painters were masters of portraiture. From portraits it is possible to analyze the aging process.

Methods

In this study, high-quality photographs of 6 self-portraits of Rembrandt and 8 portraits of Naile Hanim were evaluated for the presence of facial aging. Medical databases were used to identify studies related facial aging. For the analysis of the portraits, a set of grading scales were used for hair graying, forehead lines, glabellar lines, brow positioning, crow's feet, Marionette lines, and nasolabial folds.

Results

Both painters skillfully portrayed the real appearance of people. Visual inspection revealed that Rembrandt's hair grayed earlier than Naile Hanim in the same age group. Rembrandt had more wrinkles than Naile Hanim in the same age group. Rembrandt had many more wrinkles on his upper face than her. Naile Hanim had more prominent nasolabial folds and Marionette lines than Rembrandt in his 40s.

Conclusion

The analysis is consistent with the male and female aging process. The aging process of men and women is different, it is possible to analyze facial aging in portraits, the data of this study can be used in medical education and artworks should be more involved in medical education.