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Hair therapy: a new model for professional training and business in the men's beauty sector.

Hair therapy: a new model for professional training and business in the men's beauty sector

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Summary

The consolidation of contemporary barbershops as spaces for care, style, and socializing has transformed the men's beauty market in Brazil and other countries. In this context, hair therapy is establishing itself as a hybrid field encompassing applied trichology, aesthetics, and health education, offering new possibilities for professional training and business models. This text analyzes how the adoption of structured hair therapy protocols can improve the quality of service, facilitate the early detection of scalp dysfunctions, reinforce educational practices, and enhance competitive differentiation. Based on a narrative literature review and the systematization of professional experiences, essential competencies for hair therapists in barbershops are discussed, including scientific foundations, clinical observation, humanized communication, ethics, and an entrepreneurial vision. It argues that consistent training programs, aligned with evidence and interdisciplinarity, can qualify the sector as a relevant agent in promoting hair health, without exceeding the scope of low-complexity aesthetic practices.

Keywords: hair therapy; trichology; barber shop; men's health; entrepreneurship.

Abstract

The rise of contemporary barbershops as environments of male care, style and social interaction has reshaped the men's grooming market in Brazil and abroad. Within this transformation, scalp therapy emerges as a hybrid field connecting applied trichology, aesthetic practice and health education, creating new opportunities for professional development and business innovation. This article examines how structured scalp therapy protocols can enhance service quality, enable early identification of scalp disorders and strengthen health-education practices, while supporting competitive differentiation and client loyalty. Based on a narrative review and systematized field experience, the discussion outlines key competencies required from barbers acting as scalp therapists, including scientific literacy, clinical observation, human-centered communication, ethical judgment and business skills. Well-designed, evidence-based training programs can position the male beauty sector as a meaningful contributor to scalp health promotion while remaining within the boundaries of low-complexity aesthetic procedures.

Keywords: scalp therapy; trichology; barbershop; men's health; beauty entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction

The reconfiguration of the men's beauty market in the last two decades is evident both in large urban centers as well as medium-sized cities, barbershops have ceased to be spaces... restricted to haircuts and beard trims to become environments of expanded care, sociability and identity construction. Male aesthetics, historically treated as a peripheral aspect, it moves to the center of the beauty industry and begins to engage more intensely with the sectors. Fashion, wellness, and health.

At the same time, a change can be observed in the way men deal with their own bodies. with aging and hair health. Greater exposure to aesthetic standards, the expansion of the cosmetics market and the circulation of digital content about self-care are causing complaints. such as hair loss, itching, dandruff, excessive oiliness or scalp sensitivity

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They often arrive at the barber shop first — especially in areas where this professional...

It constitutes the main point of contact for men with some type of guidance on care. personal.

In this context, hair therapy emerges as a promising avenue. More than just a set of tools...

In cosmetic procedures, it involves a technical approach to the scalp and hair, techniques

Specific manuals, an understanding of cosmetic actives, and an educational approach geared towards change. of hygiene habits and lifestyle. The figure of the barber-hair therapist, still under construction.

Conceptually and normatively, it expresses this transition: from a professional focused on cutting to a A specialist capable of providing qualified hair care.

Beyond its clinical and aesthetic aspects, hair therapy is establishing itself as a strategic product. within the barbershop business model. Well-structured protocols, assertive communication and Ethical alignment allows adding value to the service without resorting to unfounded promises or practices. Pseudoscientific theories—phenomena that tend to proliferate in rapidly expanding markets. The debate The central question, therefore, is no longer "if" hair therapy should be offered in barbershops, but "how". To integrate it in a responsible, technically sound, and sustainable way.

2. Theoretical framework: trichology, men's health, and barber shops.

Trichology has become established throughout the 20th century as a subfield of dermatology focused on... to the study of hair and scalp, progressively incorporating contributions from cosmetology, Pharmacology and behavioral sciences. Classic references describe in detail the Mechanisms of hair growth, the hair cycle, the main types of alopecia and inflammatory changes. as well as the psychosocial impact of these conditions on quality of life.

Among the most studied conditions, androgenetic alopecia stands out as the most common form. frequent occurrence of male hair loss, with increasing prevalence starting in the third decade of life and marked by a strong genetic and hormonal component. Studies show that many men avoid seeking specialized care in the early stages, whether due to lack of knowledge, stigma, or because The mistaken perception that hair loss is inevitable. This behavior prolongs the progression of the condition. Clinically, this increases the search for solutions without evidence and hinders effective early interventions.

The literature on men's health identifies similar patterns in other dimensions of Be careful. Several studies indicate that men seek healthcare services less often, they tend to... to minimize symptoms and, less frequently, adopt preventive practices — especially in contexts of greater social vulnerability. Qualitative analyses attribute this behavior to Traditional models of masculinity that associate self-care with fragility, in addition to barriers... organizational issues such as inconvenient hours and poor communication geared towards the public. masculine.

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In this context, barbershops have been recognized as strategic spaces for actions of health promotion, especially in communities where these environments constitute places of routine coexistence. North American studies on hypertension management and disease prevention. Cardiovascular studies in barbershops demonstrate that structured interventions — integrating counseling, screening, and coordination with healthcare teams can have an impact. significant in clinical indicators.

This evidence reinforces the potential of barbershops as suitable territories for addressing hair health. Issues such as proper hygiene, sun protection of the scalp, habits that inflammation and warning signs of dermatological diseases can be addressed. a natural occurrence in this environment. The challenge lies in establishing clear boundaries between care aesthetic-educational — which includes deep cleansing, use of appropriate cosmetics and guidance. routine — and practices that require diagnosis, prescription, and monitoring by professionals of health.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach adopted is qualitative and of a theoretical-analytical nature, articulating two complementary strategies were employed. First, a narrative literature review was conducted on... trichology, hair health, men's health, and community interventions developed in barbershops. The review included articles, books, and national and international guidelines published in the last two years. decades, focusing on works that examine the interfaces between aesthetic care, well-being, and practices. health promotion.

Next, a systematic analysis of professional experiences was carried out and educational programs aimed at a male audience, developed in hair therapy courses and in training programs for barbers. The empirical corpus includes class records, protocols of customer service reports, supervisory reports, and descriptions of barbershop routines that incorporate services of hair therapy. From this material, analytical categories such as competencies were extracted. requirements, scope limits, service integration models, and barriers to implementation.

The combination of narrative review and systematization of experiences allows for the examination of a field still under consolidation, in which professional practice often precedes formalization. conceptual. Instead of statistical generalizations, the aim is to identify patterns, tensions and possibilities that support the construction of more consistent training and business models in men's beauty sector.

4. Fundamentals of hair therapy applied to the male population

Hair therapy, understood as a set of actions aimed at hygiene, balance and

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Maintaining healthy scalp and hair is based on fundamental knowledge of

Anatomy, skin physiology, and hair follicle function. In the male population, the following stand out.

Complaints related to excessive oiliness, dandruff, superficial inflammation, and scalp sensitivity.

Hairy, progressively thinning and rarefying hair in characteristic patterns.

When guided by scientific literature, technical training in hair therapy encompasses topics such as the hair growth cycle, the action of androgens on follicles, distinctions between scarring and non-scarring alopecias, the role of the skin microbiome in conditions such as seborrheic dermatitis, the effects of ultraviolet radiation on the scalp, and the influence of Behavioral factors — diet, stress, smoking, and improper use of cosmetics — Regarding hair health.

In the context of a barbershop, this repertoire translates into the ability to identify signs. Basic clinical signs — localized thinning, erythema, desquamation, papules, crusts, wounds or secretions — and relate them to the client's complaints, such as itching, burning, pain, or discomfort when using caps and helmets. The integrated analysis of these findings allows us to distinguish manageable situations with Cosmetic and hygiene measures for cases requiring referral to a dermatologist or other specialist. healthcare professional.

In addition to observational skills, hair therapy involves manual techniques and the use of... careful use of cosmetics. Massages applied with appropriate pressure and rhythmic movements can To promote local microcirculation and produce a relaxing effect, contributing to subjective perception. of well-being. Procedures such as gentle exfoliation, deep cleansing with balanced surfactants, Applying soothing lotions, moisturizing masks, or selected vegetable oils helps in... Management of mild cases of oiliness or dryness, always respecting the limits of its effectiveness. aesthetics.

In the international arena, there is a growing interest in integrated approaches that combine Medical treatments, when indicated, along with aesthetic interventions and lifestyle adjustments. Recent studies indicate a significant improvement in the quality of life of patients undergoing programs that combine clinical and cosmetic dimensions, reinforcing the complementary role — and not competitor — of the hair therapist in relation to dermatology. This positioning A multidisciplinary team recognizes hair as a marker of identity, self-esteem, and well-being. psychological.

5. Barber shops as extended spaces for self-care.

The contemporary barbershop distinguishes itself from previous models not only by its aesthetics. environment, through the offering of drinks or the themed setting. Its social relevance lies in the creation a space of trust, listening, and belonging for men of different ages and backgrounds.

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In this context, the barber is often perceived as someone with whom one can converse.

about work, family, relationships, and insecurities, opening up possibilities for introducing topics.

of health in a natural way and with less stigma attached.

The literature on interventions carried out in everyday environments reinforces the value of these.

“micro-territories of trust” as strategic points to address issues that, in contexts

Formal approaches are often avoided. The structured incorporation of hair therapy expands this...

potential. Discussing hair loss often involves addressing aging, stress, and habits.

of life, self-esteem, and even underlying medical conditions. When conducted with respect and discretion

With an educational focus, this dialogue can produce impacts that go beyond the immediate aesthetic result.

However, the same trust that makes the barber a privileged interlocutor can also be...

It can become a risk when used to support promises incompatible with nature.

Cosmetic service. Recommending products without supporting evidence, proposing prolonged treatments without criteria.

or discouraging the search for medical care compromises the integrity of the practice and can generate

Harm to the customer. Therefore, ethics and clarity regarding the limits of action are indispensable pillars.

in the training of hair therapists.

The explicit recognition that the barbershop is not a clinical space, that the barber does not perform medical diagnoses and certain signs require immediate referral, protecting both

The client as well as the professional. Far from devaluing hair therapy, such an attitude qualifies it as responsible educational and aesthetic care practices, reinforcing the credibility of the service and fostering long-lasting relationships.

6. Core competencies for training in hair therapy in barber shops

The training of barbers who work with hair therapy goes beyond the transmission of knowledge. protocols or product demonstrations. It requires the development of a set of Interdependent skills, grouped into four essential areas.

The first axis refers to the mastery of scientific fundamentals in trichology and Cosmetology. Although the professional is not expected to replace a dermatologist, it is necessary. Understanding aspects such as hair follicle structure, and the differences between oily and dry scalps. and sensitive, basic mechanisms of skin inflammation, types of alopecia prevalent in the public male and the main cosmetic active ingredients used in practice. This theoretical basis allows for the interpretation Findings with greater precision and selection of appropriate interventions.

The second axis concerns systematic clinical observation. The therapist must be trained. to identify patterns of thinning, distribution of hair loss, shine of the strands, characteristics of Peeling, skin discoloration, and signs of trauma from friction or traction. The use of simple instruments. — such as adequate lighting, magnifying glasses, and standardized forms — facilitates the organized recording of these

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findings and their longitudinal comparison.

The third axis involves communication and relational skills. Hair therapy requires physical proximity and conversations that address intimate personal care habits. Formulate asking questions without judgment, translating technical concepts into accessible language, sustaining conversations sensitive to self-esteem or lifestyle concerns and suggest medical referrals without generating embarrassment is a core skill. Active listening plays a crucial role.

Regarding the technique.

The fourth axis encompasses professional ethics and business acumen. Ethics includes transparency regarding... the limits of performance, honesty regarding expected results, refusal to make unrealistic promises and respect for client autonomy. The business vision, in turn, allows for structuring the therapy offering. Sustainable hair care, defining packages, pricing policies, scheduling, and criteria. for the acquisition of equipment and responsible outreach strategies.

Robust training programs should integrate these four pillars through theoretical and practical classes. Supervised learning, real-world case studies, and critical reflection on ethical and operational dilemmas. Without this... Integration risks creating only protocol implementers, disconnected from... Customer needs and the complexities of daily professional life.

7. Hair therapy as a business model in the men's beauty sector.

From a business perspective, hair therapy represents a significant opportunity for expansion of the barbershop's portfolio and repositioning in the health and wellness segment. masculine, and rapidly growing. Unlike one-off services, such as a haircut or a single shave, the hair therapy tends to be structured in plans or sequences of sessions, which favors recurrence. Predictable revenue and longer average customer stay time at the establishment.

A consistent business model starts with analyzing the customer profile and clearly defining... regarding the barbershop's location. In areas with a higher concentration of young men, interested in terms of aesthetic performance and prevention, demand usually revolves around leather sensitivity, scalp, oil control, and product guidance. In contexts with a higher proportion... In men over 30, in whom signs of hair thinning become more frequent, it is the goal to offer protocols focused on initial fall prevention, always with rigorous criteria for... Medical referral in cases suggestive of inflammatory alopecia or other pathologies.

The design of hair therapy packages should consider, in addition to the number of sessions and the... products used, service time, required staff qualifications, and indirect costs. This includes adequate lighting, quality of furniture, acquisition of support equipment and disposable materials. Pricing needs to be transparent, sufficient to cover costs and to remunerate technical expertise, but in a way that is proportional to the purchasing power of the target audience and consistent with...

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The barbershop's positioning in the local market.

Another strategic component is integrating hair therapy into the brand narrative. Instead of presenting the service as a side offering, the barbershop can incorporate it into its identity as a space that takes care of "the whole mind," combining aesthetics, well-being, and information based on... Evidence. Educational content on social media, internal lectures, partnerships with dermatologists. And actions with other healthcare professionals reinforce this message and attract an audience that values it. qualified guidance and continued investment in self-care.

Finally, measuring results is a fundamental element for the sustainability of... In addition to the number of packages sold, indicators such as the rate of Returns, increase in average ticket price, length of stay at the establishment, proportion of new customers. Customers are guided by referrals and perceived value in satisfaction surveys. This data informs adjustments. In the protocols, they identify bottlenecks in the customer experience and provide a basis for expansion decisions or diversification of services.

8. Challenges, risks and potential

Despite its significant potential, the consolidation of hair therapy as a formative model and business in the men's beauty sector faces structural challenges. One of the most evident is... great heterogeneity of the available courses, which vary significantly in terms of workload, faculty background, scientific rigor, and ethical commitment. Without minimum standards of However, if quality is compromised, there is a risk of trivializing the practice, with a proliferation of exaggerated promises and... resulting discrediting of the area.

Another key challenge is interprofessional dialogue. For hair therapy to become established in a responsible manner, it is essential to recognize the role of dermatologists, trichologists, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals in the diagnosis and treatment of skin diseases. Hair and scalp issues. Instead of competing for expertise, the barber-hair therapist can act as... a facilitating link between the client and the care network, identifying warning signs and guiding the search. through specialized care and by collaborating in adherence to prescribed treatments.

There are also risks related to the commodification of care. In a competitive market, in which male aesthetics are commercially exploited through discourses that amplify insecurities, hair therapy can be captured by logics that transform any discomfort into... sales opportunity. The line between meeting a legitimate need and artificially stimulating it. A feeling of inadequacy is a delicate matter. Avoiding this deviation requires constant ethical vigilance and... commitment to the principles of non-maleficence and respect for autonomy.

Still, the potential is vast. The presence of a qualified professional in hair therapy in a barbershop can help deconstruct the idea that scalp care is the only thing people care about.

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It's a gesture of excessive vanity, encouraging men to talk about insecurities, to understand

better understand one's own body and access information that is often scarce in services.

Traditional healthcare. This movement contributes not only to individual well-being, but also to...

Building cultures of masculinity that are more caring and open to prevention.

Furthermore, the increased value placed on hair therapy as a field of knowledge can stimulate... research production, the creation of guidelines, and the development of professional associations that Define minimum standards for training, certification, and conduct. This process strengthens the It provides credibility to the sector, protects the consumer, and offers barbers a path to professional development. A continuous process that goes beyond the technique of cutting.

9. Final considerations

Hair therapy, when analyzed at the interface between trichology, men's health and Entrepreneurship in the beauty industry reveals itself to be more than just an additional set of procedures. cosmetics. It constitutes a new model of professional training, which calls on the barber to expand their knowledge, enhance their observation skills, and reposition their practice as part of from an expanded network of healthcare care and education.

If structured with technical, ethical, and economic criteria, hair therapy offers... Barber shops offer a consistent opportunity for differentiation, customer loyalty, and recurring revenue generation. However, this potential is only fully realized when the pursuit of financial results is aligned to the commitment to quality information, ethical service, and respect for boundaries between Aesthetics and clinical practices.

The coming years are likely to be marked by the consolidation of training programs. robust, through strengthening dialogue with healthcare professionals, and through expanding research that Evaluate the concrete impacts of hair therapy and the development of a professional culture oriented towards this goal. to the integration between knowledge, care and economic sustainability.

Ultimately, hair therapy in the men's beauty sector can contribute to a deeper transformation in the way men relate to their own bodies and to... The idea of self-care. By transforming the barbershop into a space where hair loss can be discussed, Scalp sensitivity and lifestyle habits are as natural as discussing work or sports. This opens the way for more responsible, mature, and healthy ways of experiencing masculinity. in which well-being ceases to be taboo and becomes an expression of autonomy and self-respect.

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