

Deep Plane Face Lifting for Midface Rejuvenation

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KEYWORDS

• Deep plane • Facelift • Rhytidectomy • Aging face • Midface • Aesthetic surgery

KEY POINTS

- The platysma muscle/superficial musculoaponeurotic system/galea is the continuous superficial cervical fascia encompassing most of the facial fat, and this superficial soft tissue envelope is poorly anchored to the face.
- The deep-cervical fascia binds the structural aspects of the face and covers the facial nerve and buccal fat pad.
- Facial aging is mainly due to gravity's long-term effects on the superficial soft tissue envelope, with more subtle effects on the deeper structural compartments.
- The deep-plane is the embryologic cleavage plane between these fascial layers and is the logical place for midfacial dissection.
- The deep-plane allows access to the buccal fat pad for treatment of jowling.
- Soft tissue mobilization is maximized in deep-plane dissections and requires careful hairline planning.
- Flap advancement creates tension only at the fascia level allowing natural, tension-free skin closure, and long-lasting outcomes.
- The deep-plane advancement flap is well vascularized and resistant to complications.

INTRODUCTION

Methods used to rejuvenate the midface are varied and often depend on the perspective created by the surgeon's specialty training. Theories and beliefs about the cause of facial aging will also influence a surgeon's particular preference or prejudice. The literature is filled with controversy surrounding the cause of midfacial aging. Recent literature focuses on fat/volume loss as the principle contributor to midface aging, theoretically validating the use of facial volume enhancement as the main treatment modality.¹

But facial palpation and intraoperative views of the facial soft tissues after sub-superficial musculoaponeurotic system (SMAS) dissection and

mobilization, used as the facial rejuvenation technique, reveal excessive soft tissue redundancy (**Fig. 1**). Such photos, combined with operative experience, prove the long-term effects of gravity's downward pull on the poorly anchored superficial soft tissue envelope as the central factor in facial aging. True fat/volume loss is evident in patients suffering from HIV wasting syndrome (**Fig. 2**) but a sunken appearance is observed and facial palpation does not reveal excessive soft tissue redundancy, further debunking the volume theory of facial aging.

Techniques aimed at reversing gravity's effects have evolved as the authors' understanding of facial anatomy has progressed. Mitz and Peyronie² defined the superficial cervical facial fascia

Funding sources: None.

Conflict of interest: None.

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Clin Plastic Surg ■ (2014) ■-■

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cps.2014.08.009>

0094-1298/14/\$ – see front matter © 2014 Published by Elsevier Inc.