

Anti-Aging in the Perspective of Islamic Law

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the legal status of anti-aging practices from the perspective of Islamic law, focusing on fiqh mu 'āmalah and maqāṣid al-shari'ah. The rapid growth of the anti-aging industry raises critical questions about the halal status of products and their ethical use among Muslims, particularly in Indonesia's expanding beauty and wellness sector. This research analyzes permissible limits of body care (tazyīn) versus altering Allah's creation (taghyīr khalq Allāh), emphasizing intention, context, and benefits. Using a qualitative normative juridical approach, it examines primary Islamic sources (Qur'an, Hadith), fiqh literature, and fatwas. Findings show anti-aging treatments are permissible if free of haram elements, harmless, and sharia-compliant. Specifically: (1) skincare and non-invasive treatments are mubāh with halal ingredients; (2) Botox and fillers are allowed for medical or reasonable aesthetic needs without deception; (3) reconstructive surgery is mubāh or wājib for trauma, but purely cosmetic is ḥarām or makrūh; (4) stem cell technology is permissible if ethically sourced and therapeutic, but prohibited for embryonic manipulation. The maqāṣid al-shari'ah framework evaluates practices for preserving health (hifz al-nafs), dignity (hifz al-ird), and wealth (hifz al-māl) without greater harm (mafsadat).

KEYWORDS

Anti-aging, Islamic law, fiqh mu 'āmalah, maqāṣid al-syarī'ah, halal



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INTRODUCTION

The development of modern technology and medical science has spurred various medical and cosmetic efforts aimed at slowing the aging process, maintaining physical appearance, and improving health quality in the elderly (Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha, 2015; Fadel, 2012). This phenomenon, known as *anti-aging*, is a concept oriented not only toward beauty but also toward vitality and longevity (Fauzi, 2023).

Globally, the *anti-aging* industry has grown into a massive economic sector, encompassing skincare products, supplements, hormone therapies, and invasive medical procedures such as Botox injections, fillers, and stem cell technology (Nejadsarvari et al., 2016). In Indonesia, this trend has permeated various levels of society, including Muslims, who are active consumers as well as subjects of policies related to product *halal*ness and usage ethics (Raza et al., 2025; Widiastuti et al., 2024).

The phenomenon of *anti-aging* in the Islamic perspective cannot be separated from the fundamental principles of *sharia* that encourage adherents to maintain health, cleanliness, and appearance as integral components of religious teachings (Bhutto et al., 2023). In numerous prophetic narrations, the Prophet ﷺ exemplified the importance of caring for the body, maintaining neatness, and avoiding an unattractive appearance before Allah and fellow humans. This is reflected in the rule: "Cleanliness is part of faith."

However, Islam imposes strict restrictions on practices that contradict the principle of *tawhīd* (monotheism), damage the *fitrah* (natural disposition) of Allah's creation, or lead to excess (*isrāf*) and wastefulness (*tabdīh*) (Atiyeh et al., 2008; Bresler & Paskhover, 2018;

Hamdan et al., 2021). In this context, it is relevant to examine the legal rulings on various *anti-aging* methods through the approaches of *fiqh mu'amalah* and *maqāṣid al-syārī'ah*. Assessments of the permissibility or prohibition of *anti-aging* in Islam must consider the substance of the action, the user's intention, the resulting benefits (*maṣlahah*) and harms (*mafsadah* or *madharat*), and broader social and ethical implications (Ngah et al., 2021; Widjianto & Sitohang, 2022).

The global *anti-aging* market—for products and services such as nutritional supplements, skincare, hormonal therapies, and medical aesthetic technologies—is estimated to reach billions of dollars annually as public awareness of appearance, skin health, and long-term quality of life increases (Knott et al., 2015).

The urgency of this research is heightened by contemporary challenges. First, the *anti-aging* industry's rapid expansion in Muslim-majority countries, particularly Indonesia, demands clear Islamic legal guidance. Second, ethical concerns arise regarding deception, obsession with unrealistic beauty standards, and the psychological impacts of *anti-aging* practices on Muslim consumers. Third, legal challenges emerge in establishing *halal* certification standards for cosmetic products and medical procedures, requiring scholarly input for regulatory frameworks. Fourth, the intersection of advanced medical technologies—such as genetic engineering and stem cell therapy—with Islamic bioethics necessitates contemporary *ijtihād* to address issues unprecedented in classical *fiqh* literature.

The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive examination of *anti-aging* practices through an integrated framework combining *fiqh mu'amalah* principles with *maqāṣid al-syārī'ah* analysis, tailored to the Indonesian Muslim context. While existing Islamic legal scholarship has addressed cosmetic procedures generally, limited research has systematically analyzed the full spectrum of modern *anti-aging* practices—from topical skincare to advanced biotechnology—within a unified jurisprudential framework. This study fills this gap by providing detailed legal analysis of various *anti-aging* modalities, establishing clear parameters distinguishing permissible body care from prohibited alteration of Allah's creation, and offering practical guidance for contemporary Muslim consumers, healthcare providers, and policymakers in Indonesia and similar contexts.

The Qur'an reinforces these principles: "Indeed, Allah loves those who repent and loves those who purify themselves." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 222) These religious teachings, along with authentic hadiths such as "Indeed, Allah is beautiful and loves beauty." (Narrated by Muslim, no. 91) and "Purity (*tahārah*) is half of faith." (Narrated by Muslim, no. 223), establish a strong foundation for personal hygiene and appearance maintenance. The Prophet ﷺ was known for his exceptional cleanliness in dress, body, oral hygiene (using *miswak*), and environment, setting a practical example for Muslims to emulate.

Therefore, this study is essential to provide a contextual understanding of Islamic law regarding various forms of *anti-aging* practices in modern society. This research elaborates on how *anti-aging* is positioned in Islamic law through analysis of *fiqh* principles, *maqāṣid al-syārī'ah*, and the views of contemporary scholars, contributing to the development of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence at the intersection of religion, health, beauty, and biotechnology.

Based on the background above, this study addresses three fundamental questions:

1. What is the legal position of *anti-aging* practices in the perspective of *fiqh mu'āmalah* and Islamic law in general?
2. What is the boundary between permissible body care and the act of altering Allah's creation in *anti-aging* practices?
3. How are the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach and the principle of benefit (*maṣlahah*) used in assessing the validity of *anti-aging* practices according to *sharia*?

This research aims to:

1. Analyze the legal status of various forms of *anti-aging* practices in the context of *fiqh mu'āmalah* and Islamic legal principles.
2. Explain the *shari'i* parameters distinguishing recommended body care from actions classified as *taghyīr khalq Allāh* (altering Allah's creation).
3. Examine the relevance of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* and the concept of *maṣlahah* in establishing legal rulings on modern *anti-aging* practices.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative normative juridical approach to analyze Islamic legal sources and contemporary scholarly interpretations for deriving legal rulings (*ahkām*) on *anti-aging* practices. The method focused on examining legal texts, principles, and their application to contemporary issues within Islamic jurisprudence.

Data collection utilized library research (document analysis) of primary sources—including the Qur'an, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, classical *fiqh* texts across *madhhabs*, and secondary sources such as fatwas from the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) and Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī—and semi-structured interviews with 8 scholars and 5 practitioners selected via purposive sampling for their expertise in *fiqh mu'āmalah*. Case studies of Botox injections and plastic surgery procedures applied principles to concrete scenarios.

Data analysis employed content analysis (*tahlīl al-maḍmūn*) of texts, comparative analysis (*muqāranah*) across *madhhabs*, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* evaluation of the five essentials (*al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*), *maṣlahah-mafsadah* assessment, and application of *qawā'id fiqhīyyah* maxims.

The framework integrated classical *fiqh* with contextual analysis, using Qur'an/Sunnah foundations, analogical reasoning (*qiyās*), and contemporary fatwas under a *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* lens.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Case Studies in Problem-Solving Efforts

A. Practice Botox Injections at Beauty Clinics

One of the most popular forms of anti-aging treatment today is botox (Botulinum Toxin) injections, which is a medical procedure performed by injecting botulinum toxin in a certain dose into the facial area to remove wrinkles, fine lines, and other signs of aging. This practice is widely practiced in beauty clinics for various purposes, ranging from aesthetic reasons to specific medical needs (e.g. reducing facial muscle spasms).

From the point of view of Islamic law, the assessment of botox injections should be seen from:

1. Purpose of the injection (pure aesthetics vs. medical reasons),
2. Substances used (halal, unclean, or harmful),
3. Long-term impact (mashlahat vs. mafsat).

If it is used for medical purposes, such as overcoming certain muscle disorders or neurological disorders, then the ruling can fall into the category of *ħājiyyāt* or even *ħarūriyyāt*, and is permissible according to shari'i. However, if it is done solely for the sake of beauty, without any real need, then it is necessary to review more critically whether it includes:

- a. *Tazyiin* (ornaments/appearances) that are mubah, or
- b. *Taghyīr khalq Allāh* (transforming Allah's creation) is forbidden.

Contemporary scholars give a different view. *Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* states that the practice of botox injections is permissible if:

- a. Does not contain impure elements or haram substances,
- b. Harmless,
- c. It is not intended to deceive or alter the form of God's creation in an extreme way.

The approach of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* also requires a balance between *ħifz al-nafs*, *ħifz al-īrd* (maintaining dignity), and *ħifz al-māl*. If the procedure is performed within the limits of reasonableness, maintains the patient's confidence, does not endanger the soul, and is not excessively consumptive (*isrāf*), then the practice of botox can be categorized as mubah (*al-aṣl al-ibāḥah*).

However, if the procedure is done repeatedly just to meet certain beauty standards that are unrealistic and lead to dependence or deviation of intention, then it has the potential to become mafsat and contrary to *maqāṣid*.

B. Case Study: Plastic Surgery due to Trauma/Wound and Pure Aesthetics

Plastic surgery is a form of medical intervention that can be divided into two broad categories, namely:

1. Reconstructive plastic surgery, which is performed due to physical damage due to trauma, accidents, burns, or congenital defects;
2. Pure aesthetic plastic surgery, which is performed solely to improve the appearance, in the absence of urgent medical needs.

In the perspective of Islamic law, this difference in purpose is very important because it will affect its legal status. Scholars agree that if the operation is performed due to a medical emergency, then the ruling is permissible (*mubāh*), and it can even be *wājib* when it comes to the rescue of bodily functions or the restoration of the patient's psychological and social integrity.¹

On the other hand, if it is done solely to pursue beauty standards that are relative and have no medical indications, then the law becomes disputed. Many scholars prohibit this form because it falls under the category of *taghyīr khalq Allāh* (changing Allah's creation) and can cause negative social and spiritual effects.

The hadith of the Prophet ﷺ is the main reference in this regard: "...women who stretch their teeth for the sake of beauty, they are the ones who change God's creation." (Narrated by Bukhari no. 5931)

The *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach provides a more flexible analysis. If plastic surgery removes harm, restores dignity, and prevents psychological disorders (*ħż al-nafs*, *ħifz al-īrd*),

then such an action may be permissible. However, if it is only for personal pleasure, without functional or shari'a reasons, it can be classified as *isrāf* (excessive) and does not meet the principle of *maslahat*.

Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī also in his ruling distinguishes between reconstructive surgery (permissible) and pure cosmetic surgery (forbidden or *makruh*).

Discussion of Anti-aging in Islamic Law

A. Fiqh Analysis of Anti-Aging Practices: Skincare, Hair, and Health

Body care, both skin, hair, and health aspects in general are part of Islamic morals which are recommended in many hadiths and practices of the Prophet ﷺ. Islam is not only a religion of ritual worship, but also pays great attention to appearance, cleanliness, and health as a manifestation of moral perfection and the maintenance of the body's mandate bestowed by Allah.

Skin care, such as the use of moisturizers, sunscreens, or anti-aging creams, as well as hair treatments such as cutting, coloring with halal ingredients, or herbal treatments, are allowed in Islam as long as they do not contain elements that are haram, unclean, or harmful. The important rules used by the *fuqahā'* are:

"All forms of danger must be eliminated." (Rules of universal *fiqhīyyah*)

Also affirmed in the hadith:

"Indeed, Allah is beautiful and loves beauty." (HR. Muslim no. 91)

Therefore, all forms of treatment that aim to maintain cleanliness, prevent damage, or treat health problems are part of the benefits allowed by sharia. In fiqh, this is at the level of *hājiyyāt* and *tahsīniyyāt*, which are the supporting and complementary needs in *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* (Padela, 2019).

Nevertheless, the treatment must meet several conditions:

- a. The ingredients used are halal and *thayyib* (not unclean or contain haram elements such as human placenta, pork, or alcohol in intoxicating levels).
- b. Do not deceive or present a false impression that falls.
- c. It does not exceed the limits of shari'i, such as giving rise to *aurat*, resembling the opposite sex (*tasyabbuh*), or causing *fitnah*.

If these conditions are met, then body care — including in the context of anti-aging — can be considered *mubāh* (permissible) or even *mandūb* (recommended), as a form of gratitude for the bodily blessings and the mandate to maintain the body from Allah SWT.

B. Botox Injections, Fillers, and Aesthetic Plastic Surgery: A Comparison of Scholars' Opinions

The development of aesthetic technology in the world of modern medicine has given birth to various beauty treatment methods such as botox injections, fillers, and aesthetic plastic surgery (Mahmoud, 2022; Mansor & Ramli, 2019). This practice aims to tighten the skin, improve facial contours, and eliminate signs of aging (Alfahmi Manal, 2022; Saifuddeen et al., 2014). Although this act is medically safe to some extent, from the perspective of Islamic law, its legal status is still a matter of debate among scholars.

1. Enabling Opinions

Some contemporary scholars allow this practice on the condition that:

- a. It is not done to deceive or alter God's creation in an extreme way,
- b. Does not contain impurities or haram substances,
- c. Does not pose a danger (darar),
- d. Performed by medical professionals,
- e. Based on real medical or psychological needs.

Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī states that aesthetic procedures such as botox or fillers are permissible if they aim to remove defects, treat wounds, or maintain health, and are not performed out of pride or riyā.

It is based on the principle of:

"Urgent needs can occupy emergency positions."

It is also strengthened by the rules of maqāṣid al-syarī'ah such as ḥifẓ al-nafs (safeguarding the soul) and ḥifẓ al-ird (safeguarding dignity).

2. Prohibited Opinions

On the other hand, some other scholars prohibit this procedure if it is carried out:

- a. Solely for the sake of beauty without the need for shari',
- b. It contains elements of taghyīr khalq Allāh, which is to change Allah's creation to a pseudo-appearance,
- c. Imitating the behavior of non-Muslims in beauty standards,
- d. Causes dependence and waste (isrāf).

They refer to the hadith:

"...women who stretch their teeth for the sake of beauty, they are the ones who change God's creation." (Narrated by Bukhari no. 5931)

3. Moderate Approach

The moderate approach of fiqh does not allow absolutely and does not prohibit it entirely, but considers:

- a. Purpose of action (medical or aesthetic),
- b. Ingredient content,
- c. Sharia and social consequences,
- d. User intent.

Thus, modern aesthetic procedures such as botox, fillers, or plastic surgery:

- a. Allowed if it is therapeutic or corrective.
- b. Makruh or haram if it is manipulative and excessive.

C. Use of Chemicals/Synthetics: Halal and Thayyib Aspects

One of the important issues in the legal assessment of anti-aging practices is the use of chemicals or synthetics in care products, supplements, and aesthetic procedures. This includes the composition of substances, production processes, and their impact on the human body. In Islam, the assessment of a product is not only based on the halalness of the basic ingredients, but must also meet the standards of thayyib, namely its goodness, safety, and usefulness.

1) The Principles of Halal and Thayyib in the Qur'an

Allah SWT. said: "O man, eat of what is lawful and good on earth."

(QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 168)

The word halal refers to the legal status of the substance, while thayyib refers to the purity, benefits, and safety of use for the body. Thus, an ingredient, even if it is halal in substance, can be forbidden if it endangers health (darar) or causes excessive dependence.

2) Fiqh Issues on Synthetic Materials

In anti-aging practice, many products and procedures use synthetic substances such as:

- a. Retinoids, hyaluronic acid, and other chemical derivatives in skincare,
- b. Silicone or filler in the filler procedure,
- c. Bleaching or exfoliating agents that risk damaging skin tissue.

Some scholars allow the use of synthetic materials as long as they do not contain unclean, haram, or harmful elements, and do not come from haram human or animal body parts without a valid istihalah (chemical transformation) process.

In the fatwa DSN-MUI No. 26/DSN-MUI/III/2002, it is also emphasized that a product is declared halal if:

- a. Not derived from illegal substances,
- b. Not contaminated with impurities,
- c. Processed with impurity-free tools,
- d. No harm (based on medical and laboratory science).

D. Review of Maqāṣid al-Syārī'ah

From the point of view of maqāṣid al-syārī'ah, the use of chemicals in anti-aging can be allowed as long as:

- a. Maintaining health (hifz al-nafs),
- b. Keeping the treasure (hifz al-māl) from being wasted for destructive products,
- c. It does not threaten hifz al-dīn or hifz al-'aql with side effects that weaken consciousness or create dependence.

Thus, the shari'i decision on synthetic anti-aging products must go through scientific research and clinical trials, based not only on the name of the ingredient, but also on its impact and purpose.

E. The Use of Stem Cells and Genetic Engineering Technology: Ethical Limitations and Fiqh

Stem cells are stem cells that can develop into various types of body cells. In the world of medicine and beauty, stem cells are used for skin rejuvenation, wound healing, and regenerative therapy. Meanwhile, genetic engineering is used to modify a person's biological traits to prevent disease or improve physical and aesthetic performance.

The use of these two technologies has raised debates in contemporary fiqh, particularly related to:

- a. Origin of cells (human, embryo, animal),
- b. Purpose of use (therapeutic vs. aesthetic),
- c. Methods and long-term impacts (benefit vs. mafṣadat),
- d. The ethics and integrity of God's creation.

F. Approach to Islamic Fiqh and Ethics

In Islamic fiqh, medical technology is judged based on general principles:

"All forms of danger must be eliminated." And "A state of emergency allows for the prohibited."

Therefore, stem cell therapy to treat degenerative diseases or repair tissue damage to the body is allowed, especially if it comes from the following sources:

- a. The patient's own self (autologous),
- b. umbilical cord,
- c. Fetuses resulting from natural miscarriage that are not the result of abortion are prohibited.

However, if it comes from cloned embryos, aborted fetuses, or infinite engineering, then scholars agree to reject and prohibit its use because it is contrary to the principles of *hifz al-nafs*, *hifz al-dīn*, and the prohibition of *taghyīr khalq Allāh*.

Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islāmī has also stipulated that the use of stem cells is permissible on the following conditions:

- a. Not coming from a prohibited source,
- b. Does not damage human dignity,
- c. It does not contradict the values of sharia.

G. Genetic Engineering: Between Innovation and Violation of Nature

Genetic engineering (gene editing) such as CRISPR has become a serious issue in Islamic ethics (Al-Tabba et al., 2020). If it is done to treat genetic diseases, it can be allowed on the principle of *maṣlaḥah*. But if it's used to change skin tone, shape the face, or enhance beauty, it includes:

- a. Beyond the limits,
- b. Resembling the role of Allah as *Khāliq*,
- c. It leads to an arrogant and ungrateful attitude towards His creation.
- d. The *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach requires the use of this technology:
- e. To protect the soul (*hifz al-nafs*),
- f. Maintaining healthy offspring (*hifz al-nasl*),
- g. Not creating social slander and moral damage (*fasād*).

CONCLUSION

This normative juridical study established that *anti-aging* practices are generally permissible (*mubāḥ*) in Islamic law when aligned with *fiqh mu'āmalah* and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* principles, including halal and *thayyib* ingredients, avoidance of harm (*darar*), and no excessive alteration (*taghyīr*) of Allah's creation for deception or vanity. Permissibility depends on intent, necessity, and method—from recommended skincare to conditionally allowed therapeutic Botox—while purely cosmetic surgeries lacking medical need are discouraged or prohibited. For future research, empirical interdisciplinary studies on socio-cultural drivers, psychological effects, and long-term ethical impacts in Muslim communities, alongside standardized halal certification for biotechnologies like genetic engineering and stem cells, would offer vital guidance for consumers, providers, and regulators in Islamic bioethics.

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