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MEN NOW ACCOUNT FOR ONE IN TEN OF COSMETIC SURGERY PATIENTS, WITH ANTI-AGEING SURGERIES SUCH AS BROW LIFTS AND NECK LIFTS SEEING THE BIGGEST INCREASE. SOPHIA CHARALAMBOUS INVESTIGATES THE IMPACT OF A GROWING CULTURE OF MALE PERFECTION

The cutting edge of fashion

While cosmetic surgery remains an industry dominated by female procedures, men account for roughly one in ten of all cosmetic surgery patients. In fact, the number of operations in the UK for both men and women rose by 0.2 per cent from 2011 to 2012, with rhinoplasty – or nose jobs – remaining the most popular procedure for men.

According to the British Association of British Plastic Surgeons, (BAAPS), anti-ageing surgery such as male brow lifts saw the biggest gain in clients from 2011 to 2012 – increasing by 19 per cent from 125 to 149 – with facelifts following close behind and up 14 per cent.

The research is backed by a number of noted cosmetic surgeons based on Harley Street, specialising in different areas of cosmetic surgery, who all recognise a trend toward anti-ageing procedures.

Dr Julian De Silva, a leading specialist in facial cosmetic surgery, based at 10 Harley Street, treats male clients from both England and the Middle East and has noticed a demand for anti-ageing procedures such as blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery), neck lifts and augmentation of the cheeks and chin.

With a client base of male and female professionals aged between 35 and 65 and ranging from lawyers to Bollywood actors, Dr De Silva puts the rise down to cultural changes. “I think culture has changed, and your appearance has become more important now,” he says.

“The reality is that looking youthful and healthy are positive things in our culture. It is not just celebrities but it is various messages from TV as well – everyone wants to look their best – and it has actually been linked to improving your professional chances of getting a promotion and the chances of finding a better partner.

“In parts of the US, like Beverly Hills in particular, every one has had something done – it is the showbiz culture. I don’t think we’re quite at that level yet but certainly appearance is still important in London.”

Speaking on what the future holds for the industry, he predicted that fat transfers are going to become popular. The process involves taking the

fat from around the belly, which has the highest collection of stem cells, and moving it to other areas of the body.

“The results are that it has a positive effect on the skin – so right now, a huge amount of research is being done in this area,” he says. “It is the next frontier of medicine.”

Despite surgery figures for men falling 4.5 per cent, from 4,298 operations performed in 2011 to 4,102 in 2012, cosmetic enhancements still continue to attract interest from the male population. In the research collected by BAAPS, eyelid surgery also rose by 11 per cent and fat transfer to the face went up by ten per cent. Meanwhile, more common male procedures, particularly gynaecomastia (or “man boob”) reduction, rose by seven per cent from 741 to 790.

At Linia Cosmetic Surgery on Harley Street, Dr Maisam Fasel has treated a number of men, the most common procedures being gynaecomastia reduction and Vaser (Vibration Amplification of Sound Energy at Resonance) liposuction, a new technique used for fat removal and contouring areas of the body. “It uses safe ultrasound technology to break down fat cells before removing them,” says Dr Fasel.

“It is superior to traditional liposuction as it allows a greater amount of fat to be removed, allows much better sculpting of the body and also produces tightening of the skin. It can be done under local or general anaesthetic, and can be used to treat a wide variety of different areas in the body. At present, it is equally popular with both men and women.”

Dr Fasel, however, does not believe the increasing number of males undergoing plastic surgery is a sign that society is steadily becoming more vain, adding: “I wouldn’t say that the world is becoming more obsessed with appearance. I see it as a sign of an affluent, socially mature society where people are happy to invest in their image.

“Initially, this related to women mainly, but now men are becoming much more aware of how they look and present themselves, and it seems the art of grooming is back in vogue. I do expect to see a growing demand for buttock implants and body sculpting with techniques such as Vaser liposuction, which are aimed at creating a chiselled, well-defined look rather than just removing excess fat.”

Identical twins Maurizio and Roberto Viel, of London Centre for Aesthetic Surgery in Harley Street, have pioneered the surgical procedure penoplasty, used to enhance the length or girth of the penis. They do this by either releasing the penile suspensory ligament to add up to two inches in length, or using liposuction to collect fat from the stomach or thighs to then inject into the penis to increase girth by up to two inches.

Speaking on the growing demand for the procedure, Roberto quips: “Well, I have a different penis in my hand every week on the operating table. There will always be a demand for this surgery because size matters to many men. Penoplasty is still the most commonly requested treatment by men at my clinic and the patients are so varied – rich, unemployed, straight, gay, married, single, young or in their 70s.”

Maurizio, who has had a nose job, liposuction, and regular botox, has only recently convinced his brother Roberto to have liposuction on his stomach, which will be his first cosmetic procedure.

Roberto adds: “Maurizio and myself are hugely into what we do, we are Italian and we love beauty. I think for us, if the possibilities are there, why not? Nowadays, men are under a similar pressure to women to live up to the image of perfection, which has been highlighted in the press by the likes of sports personalities such as David Beckham and models such as David Gandy.

“There is also the idea of feeling inadequate, which has been compounded by the *Fifty Shades of Grey* effect in which men feel they have to live up to a fantasy idea of what women expect.”



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Roberto Viel