Cosmetic Surgery

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Brits demand a high daily dose of cosmetic surgery
Latest research from MINTEL shows that during the course of 2007 almost 1,600 cosmetic surgery procedures were carried out every single day. Indeed, in their quest for the perfect body and eternal youth, Brits put themselves through no less than 577,000 cosmetic operations and treatments this year, up from only 300,000 just two years ago.

"Today, the British perception of beauty is based on airbrushed images of models and photos of surgically enhanced celebrities, both young and old. For many the natural look simply can't compete and leaves them feeling inadequate. This, along with a love of all things anti-ageing is driving Brits towards cosmetic procedures," examples Alexandra Richmond, senior cosmetics analyst at MINTEL.

MINTEL reveals that the cosmetic surgery market is now worth just over Â£900 million - more than twice that of 2005 (Â£430 million), with the market set to break the Â£1 billion mark next year.

Injecting growth
The real driving force in the market has been the huge rise in the number of non-surgical procedures, such as botox and collagen fillers. In 2005, just 230,000 of these treatments were carried out, but today this has risen to no less than 472,000.

These non-invasive treatments have really taken off in recent years, because many are programme-led and encourage people to keep coming back for top-ups. Brits also see them as a relatively risk-free alternative to surgery, when looking to permanently alter their appearance. But the fact that these delicate procedures do not have to be carried out by medically qualified personnel, and that this part of the industry is still self-regulated, really should be of more concern to British consumers.

Says Liz Dale, Director of The Harley Medical Group, established for 25 years and with 18 clinics registered with the Healthcare Commission nationwide , "Interest in cosmetic surgery and treatments is continuing to boom. With this sort of growth, we believe that its even more important that the government becomes actively involved in implementing cosmetic surgery regulation to properly protect patients. Whilst all of our clinics are registered with the Healthcare Commission and all of our procedures carried out by fully trained and qualified medical staff, it's of real concern that 3,500 clinics are currently unregistered, with injectible treatments using prescription drugs being carried out by, in some cases, staff with no medical training whatsoever."

She adds, "The recent move to declassify lasers means that non surgical treatments using these high powered lasers could also be carried out in unregistered clinics by non medical staff. Patients need to be careful and only have non surgical procedures at clinics registered by the Healthcare Commission."

Self-conscious Britain
MINTEL's exclusive consumer research finds that today 44% of Brits, or an incredible 21 million adults, would consider cosmetic surgery. The majority (60%) of them say that it is their self-consciousness that would push them to surgically change the way they look. Meanwhile, one in four simply want to look younger (23%) and the same proportion want to boost their sex appeal (22%).

What is more, one in ten (10%) of those who would consider plastic surgery said that they have been influenced by reading about it in magazines and from seeing it on makeover shows on TV.

"As a nation, we are clearly becoming less squeamish about going under the knife, with the culture of extreme makeover programmes desensitising people to surgery. Many Brits today simply do not consider the obvious risks involved and are choosing to put their image first," comments Alexandra Richmond.

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