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## Decision Making In Facial Rejuvenation

By Simon Eccles

The last 10 years has seen a huge increase in patients requesting facial rejuvenation. There are over 48,000 surgical procedures carried out annually in the UK, and this includes facelifts, eyelid surgery, and rhinoplasty (nose modifying) surgery. The range of treatments available to patients is bewildering, and the largest area of growth has been in the non-surgical aesthetic market. Complex facial surgical procedures still rate in the top 5 surgeries listed for men and women in the UK, but the non-surgical market has increased so that now it generates £3.6 billion a year.

Patients are subject to constant battering from the press, TV and celebrities, and the offer of 'quick fix' surgery and treatments. These offers seem appealing and low risk, but often this is not the case. Patients are left dissatisfied and unhappy, and do not achieve the results they seek. The department of Health has commissioned several reports to attempt to regulate non-surgical treatments, and ensure that those who are offering these treatments are adequately trained. This has not really had the effect that one might hope for, and the unwary patient may still not achieve the results that they desire despite spending a considerable amount of money. Likewise, the Royal College of Sur-

geons of England, supported again by the department of Health is going to introduce surgical standards for aesthetic surgery and this will provide a means of ensuring that your chosen surgeon is properly trained and has sufficient experience.

When choosing a surgeon, you should ensure that they are a member of a professional organisation such as BAAPS (British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons) or BAPRAS (British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons). Both of these organisations seek to ensure that their members are well trained and operate to the highest clinical standard.

I always see my facial aesthetic patients at least twice. The first consultation is a 'getting to know you' experience for us both, and the goal of this should be an understanding of what the patient wants to achieve. It also allows me to as the surgeon to examine them fully, and discuss how we may address their concerns. I encourage patients to bring photographs with them, and this can provide vital information and be very helpful in planning treatment, surgical and non-surgical. There is usually a 'cooling off' period between the appointments, and time for reflec-



tion by the patient and the ability to consider the surgery I have discussed.

It is not possible to design a universal facial rejuvenation process, but this needs to be highly individualised. It is important never to 'sell' an operation to a patient, and I think patients should be wary of this. My patients usually tell me that they want to look younger and not different, and for me this means facial rejuvenation. Patients are often surprised that I use surgical and non-surgical treatments, and I think now that many of my colleagues would advocate this. Nonsurgical treatments that I routinely carry out include use of Botox and fillers.

The only synthetic fillers I use are based on hyaluronic acid, and are semi permanent. By this I mean that they will if used correctly produce subtle changes in the shape of lips, nasolabial

groves and cheeks, but their effects last for 6 months of so, and after this time will need to be repeated. Likewise Botulinum toxin, which has been used routinely in facial aesthetic treatments for 15 years only has a temporary effect, and may last for between 4 to 6 months.

These products offer very different things. Botox is used to soften creases or wrinkles in the skin, and is very effective around the eyes and forehead. It will, if used correctly still allow for movement of the eyebrows and forehead, but will give a softer appearance. Hyaluronic acid based fillers can treat deeper lines, particularly around the mouth, can fill out deflated lips, and fill out the cheeks. Again I always feel it is best to start subtly, and then add more if necessary. This may mean several visits, but I find my patients are happier, and I can achieve the results that they are seeking.