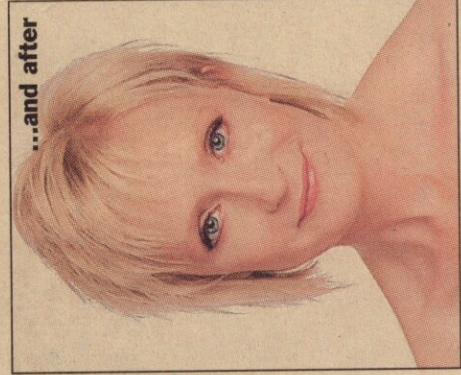
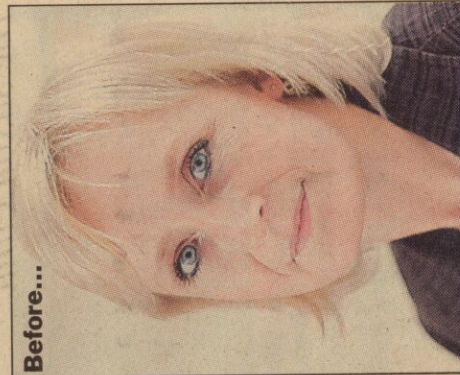
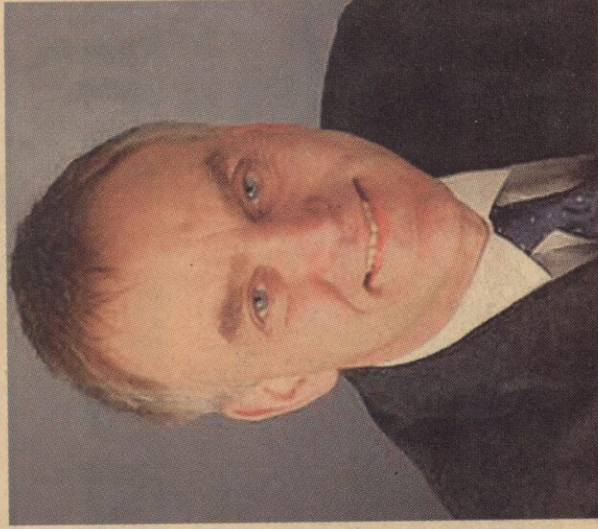


Cosmetic surgery available closer to home now



AGE discrimination may be about to become illegal, but nobody can legislate for how people are perceived. And if you look even slightly past your sell-by date who doesn't believe it can affect the business and create opportunities that come your way?

Which may account for the increasing popularity of cosmetic surgery, which not so long ago was the exclusive preserve of the super-rich and film stars.

One of the busiest cosmetic surgeons operating in this area is Adrian Richards (pictured right) a former NHS consultant at Stoke Mandeville and also the main plastic surgeon at Northampton General for five years.

He has a practice in Harley Street but finds

more and more of his patients prefer to consult him locally, and have their operations closer to home at private hospitals like the Saxon Clinic in Milton Keynes, the Three Shires in Northampton or the Shelburne at High Wycombe.

"Most of the people I see are working but they are certainly not all rich," Mr Richards told Business Citizen. Women still make up 80 per cent of his patients but an increasing number of men are getting the message too.

"The fact is that it works and it's safe. Many patients time their procedures between jobs or during holidays but actually most people come back after a week only slightly bruised," he says.

Facelifts, eye lid re-

ductions (which can work a magical improvement and take 10 years straight off the appearance) breast enhancements or reductions and tummy tucks are the operations most in demand.

Also popular, especially with business people, is a simple injection treatment that solves the problem of sweaty hands - a real turn-off for many.

Adrian Richards has all the evidence he needs for the therapeutic effect of people feeling good about themselves because their appearance is improved. Nonetheless he doesn't believe cosmetic surgery is right for everybody and he usually counsels patients to wait if they are going through a traumatic time in their lives. He also believes in managing expecta-

tions, usually advising that the clock can be turned back only eight to 10 years.

"Fifty is probably the optimum age for surgical intervention; it is never going to be as good for someone who turns up at 60 having smoked, never moisturised and generally not taken care of their skin," he says. Before 50 other less dramatic treatments can also be highly effective, such as dermabrasion, laser hair removal and techniques to soften lines and wrinkles, so Mr Richards works with a team of highly qualified nurse practitioners to deliver those.

Anybody considering cosmetic surgery should take some precautions to ensure a successful outcome.

* Go somewhere that is recognised and es-

tablished - personal recommendation is ideal.

* Check that your surgeon is on the GMC Specialist Register for Plastic Surgeons (see website).

* Look for membership of a body such as BAAPS (British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons).

* Ask to see photographs of real patients he/she has operated

on and ask how many procedures are carried out per month.

* What is the complication rate and what sort of complications are most frequent.

* If revisional surgery is necessary who pays for it.

A consultation with Mr Richards can usually be arranged in two weeks with any procedure following within a couple of months.

For more information about cosmetic surgery call Mr Adrian Richards's office on 0800 328 5743 or visit www.arandassociates.co.uk or e mail Advice@arandassociates.co.uk

Seeing is Believing as Lesley Arkin turns 25