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Consumer rights and advice - this issue: *Cosmetic Surgery*

Each year in Britain, there are approximately 100,000 cosmetic plastic surgery procedures undertaken. *Yattar Yattar* talks to Mr Fahmy S. Fahmy, consultant plastic surgeon, about choosing a surgeon even for minor treatments

Sitting with Mr Fahmy, the overriding first impression is of a intelligent, calm man who is used to putting patient care first and foremost – and used to putting his patients at ease. Our questions were simple: when should people think about plastic surgery, and where should they go for advice? Without medical training it can be hard to know the difference between one doctor and another, and whether a procedure will deliver the desired results.

Mr Fahmy says: 'First of all, find a surgeon with NHS training. This ensures they've been through the UK's national training programmes. Second, look for 'Consultant' – not all surgeons are consultants, and the term 'Mr' does not actually mean a surgeon has attained this level – it only means they are a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons.'

Appearances count also – when you go for an initial consultation, only be satisfied if you are comfortable with the surgeon. Mr Fahmy says: 'You should never feel under pressure. This is a relationship that lasts from six months to a year. Also, only meet face to face, never settle for a phone consultation.' There is a two-week cooling off period at Spire Yale Hospital in Wrexham, and Mr Fahmy charges £125 for an initial consultation.

It's essential to spend some time on research before the initial consultation – visit www.baaps.org.uk, which has advice on procedures and a useful directory of surgeons by region in the UK. Get advice from your GP at an early stage, before committing to any procedure. Mr Fahmy says: 'We always write to a patient's GP to keep them

informed of how the treatment progresses. That's the issue with surgery abroad – if there is a problem, very often it is impossible to obtain a record of the procedure.'

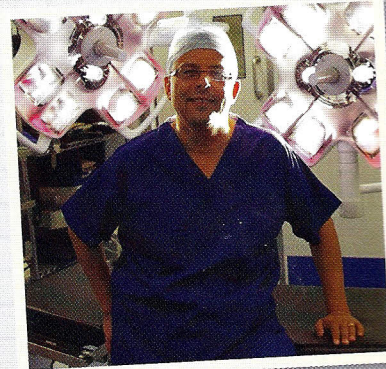
For overseas procedures, the attraction can be a package holiday and cheaper surgery – 'cosmetic tourism'. The danger is that if there are complications, you cannot easily see your surgeon without travelling. Mr Fahmy says: 'I've treated patients who have had procedures in Europe, complications arose, and then needed to be treated under the NHS. I've also had patients needing care who had procedures in the South of England, and couldn't keep travelling to the south of the country so it was much better to treat them in Wrexham.'

There is a change in the way cosmetic surgery is perceived in this country, and procedures are on the increase. The most common procedure is breast augmentation for women, followed by tummy tucks. Says Mr Fahmy: 'There is cultural permission for this now – people are thinking 'I don't mind if people know that I've had surgery.'

'You need to be clear in your mind what you want to achieve, write your questions down, and come along to the cosmetic evenings at Spire Yale in Wrexham. If you go to my website – www.cosmeticplastic.co.uk – you will see more guidance on the decision-making process.'

'Afterwards, it is very rewarding and gratifying to see the difference – patient confidence increases dramatically and it can literally transform their lives.'

Spire Yale Wrexham customer services line is 01978 262462 and their website is www.spirehealthcare.com/yale.



Mr Fahmy CV

Mr Fahmy S Fahmy, FRCSI (plast) has been a consultant plastic, cosmetic, reconstructive and hand surgeon since 2001. His work is divided between NHS and private practice in Chester and Wrexham. Mr Fahmy is a full member of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS), and is included in the specialist register established by the GMC in 1995. Mr Fahmy is an examiner of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and was on the Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) for training in Plastic Surgery. For any enquiries, you can email Mr Fahmy on info@cosmeticplastic.co.uk or contact his secretary on 0800 756 9828 or 07949 515013.