

(Parkland Life Column for April 2009)

## What's Up Docs? Plastic Surgery Predictions

By David J. Levens, MD, PA, FACS

Each year, the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS), the leading national organization of board-certified plastic surgeons who specialize in cosmetic surgery, offers its predictions for cosmetic surgery in the coming 12 months. Predictions are based on interviews with leading plastic surgeons around the country.

Here are some of the predictions in the recently-released survey:

- . The growth and popularity of cosmetic fillers such as Juvederm and Restylane will continue to increase as products continue to evolve and new players enter the market.
- . The number of patients seeking plastic surgery procedures for body contouring after dramatic weight loss (abdominoplasty, lower body lift, upper arm lift) will continue to rise.
- . Reloxin, an injectable form of Botulinum Toxin Type A, will gain FDA approval and compete with Botox, the most popular cosmetic procedure for the past 5 years. Other similar products may begin to enter pre-market clinical trials.
- . Consumers looking for a bargain on cosmetic procedures will unfortunately lead to an increase in horror stories about “discount injectables” bought offshore and cosmetic medicine and cosmetic surgical procedures performed by untrained or poorly trained practitioners.
- . Experimental techniques for non-invasive fat removal, such as SonoSculpt and UltraShape as a future alternative or adjunct to liposuction, will continue be tested in clinical trials.
- . Men will represent a growing segment of the cosmetic surgery market. According to a consumer study last year, 57% of men approve of cosmetic surgery, and 20% would consider having cosmetic surgery. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of American men surveyed said they would not be embarrassed if people in addition to their family and close friends knew they had undergone cosmetic surgery.
- . As the popularity of non surgical and minimally invasive procedures continues to grow, surgeons and manufacturers will develop new techniques and products that advance the science, produce even better results and lessen recovery time.

. Cosmetic surgery “vacations” will become less popular as educated consumers understand the safety and risk issues associated with surgical procedures and travel. Surgery performed by board-certified plastic surgeons, in accredited facilities where follow-up care is available will continue to be the safest option and the best value.

. There is a clear trend toward more consumer sophistication regarding healthcare choices. Surveys are showing that individuals considering cosmetic surgery increasingly inquire about board certification of practitioners, and accreditation of surgical facilities.

That last point is the most promising of all the predictions. The more informed the patient is before having a surgery, the better the outcome is likely to be. When having an initial consultation with a cosmetic surgeon, the patient should not be bashful about asking for information on the surgeon’s certifications, affiliations and education as well as about the safety and accreditation of the facilities where procedures are performed. After all, safety should be a number one consideration especially for cosmetic surgery, as it is purely elective.

#

**David J. Levens, MD, FACS**, is a Columbia University Medical School graduate, a Board-certified Plastic Surgeon, and former Chief of Surgery at Coral Springs Medical Center. In practice in Coral Springs since 1989, he can be reached at 954-752-1020 or [www.DrLevens.com](http://www.DrLevens.com).