

Cosmetic surgery boom as WFH 'lets patients avoid those awkward questions'

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Harley Street clinics have seen a surge in people having cosmetic surgery because working from home means they can avoid questions from colleagues, according to a leading practitioner.

Dr Julian de Silva, a facial plastic surgeon, said his clinic saw a 22 per cent rise in patients in the last six months of 2021 as people took advantage of not going into the office during the pandemic.

As they do not have to see colleagues, more people are choosing procedures with longer recovery times, such as face and neck lifts, he explained.

“The pandemic has certainly brought about a rise in demand for more invasive procedures,” Dr de Silva said.

“What put a lot of people off surgery prior to Covid was all the questions they would face when they returned to the office about the reasons for having the procedure. They found the idea a bit too intimidating, but working from home has removed all that.”

According to Dr de Silva, who runs The Centre for Advanced Facial Cosmetic and Plastic Surgery, Harley Street saw its busiest year in a decade with a 15 per cent rise in cases after lockdown restrictions were eased last year.

Many of the patients came from abroad to take advantage of less restrictive Covid rules in the UK, compared with the rest of Europe. Finance director Simona Suiogan, 48, from Canary Wharf, had six procedures with Dr de Silva last year, including a face, neck and eyebrow lift.

She said: “I felt that I looked old and wanted something to cheer myself up for my birthday. I liked the fact that I could work from home while I recovered when I had some swelling while my body healed.

“The working changes brought about by Covid definitely made it easier.”

Dr Judy Todd, a leading aesthetic doctor who practises at the Taktouk Clinic in Knightsbridge, which is rivalling Harley Street as London’s go-to area for cosmetic surgery, has also been busy. She said: “Patient numbers and demand for aesthetic treatments have been up well over 20 per cent in the past year.”

For Dr Todd, bookings have come uniformly over the year “as opposed to during holiday season in the past, when [patients] could conceal any downtime from procedures”.

“The trend has definitely been towards a subtly refreshed appearance, clients don’t want it to be obvious that they’ve had any work done,” she said.

“They want people to notice that they look younger but not with the frozen face look that was prevalent in the 2010s.”