



The beauty of Plastic Surgery

Plastic surgery is commonly equated to cosmetic surgery. Things cannot be further from the truth. Though cosmetic surgery issues/news are more glamorous/attention catching, and cosmetic surgery demand is often portrayed to be rapidly increasing, the fact is that cosmetic surgery procedures are just a fraction of the entire spectrum of reconstructive & plastic surgery, more so in a country such as India.

Plastic Surgery has its a modern origins in treating complex gunshot wounds, deformities & disabilities during major wars. The first plastic surgery unit was set up in 1917 by Harold Gilles in the UK, towards the end of the First World War. Since then, surgeons began applying plastic surgery principles in ever increasing scenarios to improve results in existing procedures or provide a remedy to problems without any existing treatment.

Development of Microvascular Surgery in the 1960s was a giant leap in this field. This involves placing stitches using sutures finer than the human hair by looking through an operating microscope. This gave a Plastic Surgeon the ability to give dramatic results by means of

would have been discarded. The technique of Microsurgical tissue transfer allowed use of body tissues from one area (where they can be spared) to an area where tissue/body part has been lost/damaged by injury, infection or even cancer. The most recent application of this has been Hand transplant and face

transplantsurgery; however both are still in the development stage.

As the field of plastic surgery expanded to include burns care, craniofacial surgery, hand surgery and deformity & disability correction for any externally visible problems, the emphasis was on delicate tissue handling, meticulous attention to detail and planning at a micro-level. Benefit of these principles are

ten by our ancient physician 'Sushruta' in 700BC. Surgical procedures designed by him are still performed today, called as the Indian technique. Over the years, indian surgeons have achieved great heights with their overseas work; however in the last decade, the plastic surgery fraternity has been receiving accolades for similar work in India itself. With worldwide developments in plastic surgery coming from many Indian institutes, surgeons from 'developed' countries are visiting India to update themselves. And with the surgeons flocking to India, patients are

the vanity of some high society person. The same procedures can make a phenomenal difference to the life of a common man as well. Correcting a crooked nose of a young lady or balding scalp in a young male can help strike a marriage alliance; reducing oversized breasts of an old lady can relieve her of her shoulder or neck arthritis.

Simple procedures like, correcting a face scar can restore self-confidence in a person and give new meaning to his life. This and other applications are unfortunately not illustrated to the general public, adding to the notion that



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ters are run by people with inadequate or poor training; it is easy for the average person to get duped by aggressive publicity pursued by them; risk of complications or poor results is very high in such instances.

It takes about 12-13 years of rigorous medical training to qualify as a Plastic Surgeon, similar to that needed to be a Cardiac or Neurosurgeon- only this can guide the surgeon to make a sound decision of balancing the patient's expectations with the physical features of the problem. This is the only way to ensure smooth



Hair Transplant



not far behind.

Cosmetic surgery has caught the attention of the general public of late, glamorized by the stars & publicized by the media. However, cosmetic surgery has in it something more than just to satisfy

these procedures are not meant for the common man. Matters cannot be farther from the truth. Cosmetic or plastic surgery procedures make a far greater impact on the lives of the less affluent section of society; correcting a hand deformity in the sole earning member can feed an entire family, correcting face deformity of a person cured of leprosy can remove the disease stigma and help his integration into society.

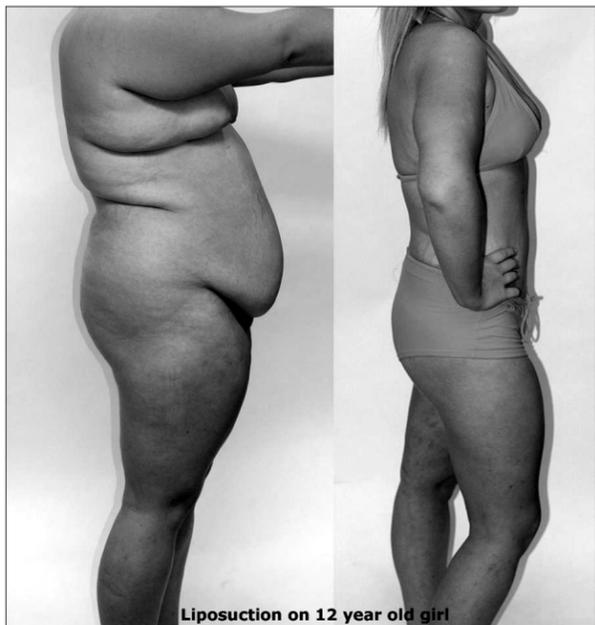
Finally, access to plastic surgery is increasing of late; in a Tier B or C city in India, with the average procedure costing similar to an average surgery in orthopaedic or gynaecology, about half the price of doing the same in a metro city close by, and ten per cent the cost in US or UK.

With all these seeming benefits, there are the darker issues too. With a rapidly spiraling demand, increasing expectations of modern life to look better & perform better, facilities offering cosmetic services are popping up in the blink of an eye at every street corner in larger cities. Unfortunately, many of these cen-



surgical recovery with predictable, safe results and thus a new lease to life.

Improved awareness is essential among the average person, to ensure society at large benefits from this medical specialty, while avoiding permanently scarring of their body by falling into the wrong hands.

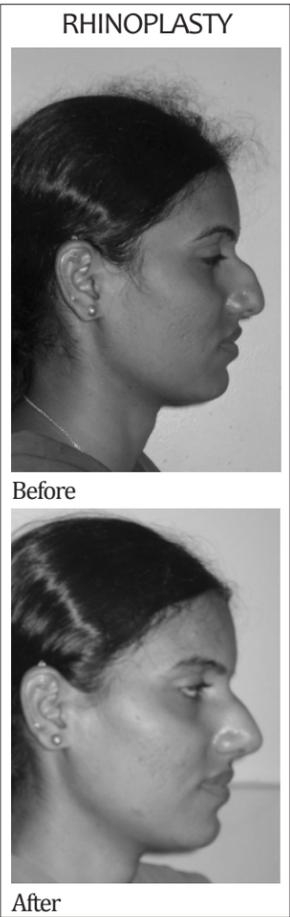


Liposuction on 12 year old girl

best appreciated in procedures of the hand, face and genitals, by making a dramatic difference to the outcome in even apparently minor problems-very often the critical difference in success & failure of the procedure.

India has a unique position in the field of plastic surgery. Ancient plastic surgery is traced to have its roots in the 'Sushruta Samhita' writ-

reimplantation procedures & microsurgical tissue transfer. The former allowed successful reattachment of a body part that is detached completely-amputated- hand, foot, digits, even ear, nose and scalp that have been successfully reattached. Without microsurgery, these body parts



RHINOPLASTY