



For men who have skin in the game

In a youth-obsessed world, more South African men are going under the knife to keep looking sharp, writes **Shanthini Naidoo**

ARE you a guy who wants to stay ahead in the workplace? Join the growing posse going under the knife to keep that competitive edge. Men who want to look better in the boardroom or even in selfies aren't just dressing well and toning their muscles at the gym — they are turning to medical procedures for help.

"This is not a trend only among metrosexual men who are meticulous about their appearance," said Sandton plastic surgeon Dr Ridwan Mia. "Patients vary from regular family guys — fathers and grandfathers — to executives and professionals, like doctors and lawyers."

"Definitely men who work in sales and service industries — estate agents and insurance salesmen — are having procedures done. They have to compete with men who are younger, where people who look fresher, more healthy and less tired give a better impression to potential buyers."

He said that often his patients want to feel good about themselves, particularly due to social media pressure. "I have certainly had male patients saying 'When I take a selfie my chin is too big, or my eyelids are heavy, my nose is too big'. It affects men as much as women."

According to London's Daily Telegraph, studies show the number of men going under the knife is not just increasing dramatically, but high-profile male celebrities are no longer shy about admitting what they have had done.

Last October — while on stage picking up an award, no less — 43-year-old singer Robbie Williams admitted to having had "some fillers, and some Botox" and, just for good measure, "something done to my chin, which means I can't move my forehead".

Reality-TV presenter Simon Cowell, 57, has compared getting

Botox to brushing his teeth, and *Cold Feet* actor James Nesbitt, 52, cheerfully admitted that his hair transplant was "ridiculous, but it's horrible going bald. Anyone who says it isn't lying."

"Losing my hair was practically an obsession. But also, I'm an actor, so I'm in the public eye a lot and I really felt that my hair loss could affect my career prospects."

The number of men getting cosmetic surgery in Britain has risen by more than 110% since 2000, according to the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons.

In South Africa, Mia said the most popular surgeries included:

- Blepharoplasty or removal of droopy skin at the eyes (R35 000);
- Rhinoplasty, or nose jobs (R40 000 to R60 000);
- Gynaecomastia or reduction of man boobs (moobs) (R25 000);
- Liposuction or removal of fat from love handles or tummy (R35 000 to R65 000); and

Definitely men who work in sales and service — estate agents and insurance salesmen — are having procedures

- Otoplasty, when the ears are reshaped or pinned back (R10 000 to R15 000).

Then there are nonmedical treatments such as reading, where the skin is injected with chemical reinforcers to appear taut, laser treatments for smoother skin, hair implants and more.

Unlike their international counterparts, not many South African men would publicly admit to my chin, which means I can't move my forehead".

Reality-TV presenter Simon Cowell, 57, has compared getting



HANDSOME SUM: Men are turning to Botox, surgery and fillers to hold back the years or deal with gym-resistant features such as man boobs

Illustration: SYLVIA E K MCKEOWN

comment on how I look and my wife also has had a few things done, which we don't need to share with our social circle."

But he said the regular sessions at Medi-Sculpt Clinic had changed his life. "From a self-esteem point of view, it made me feel better and more confident when I have to speak on a world stage, if I am lecturing or appearing on television. I haven't had acne since starting the treatment. It started off as treatment for age spots, which are gone. I use a Fraxel laser which causes the collagen levels to rise, and encourages growth of new collagen."

"After the first treatment my face went into baby-skin mode. I had a horrible double chin which is not there any more thanks to Botox."

"I do a chemical peel once a month, but I don't have to use expensive cosmetics to maintain it. I do take vitamins and I am healthy, with regards to diet and exercise. I think personalised cosmetic assessments are important for confidence," he said.

"For some, it is the body that needs work."

Plastic surgeon Dr Chetan Patel said his patients wanted to take their shirts off at the beach and go to the gym with confidence.

"The gynaecomastia is popular because you cannot fix [man boobs] with exercise. It is breast tissue you

can't get rid of no matter how much you work out.

"These men won't take their tops off at the beach or wear a tight T-shirt at gym. Some have it as a physiological condition where the breast grows during adolescence. They are often ashamed of it and once we assess the patient's psychological status and do the surgery if they qualify, they are

very happy."

Patel added that frustration arises because of unfounded advice that exercise can fix body conditions.

"People think toning the muscles will fix bingo arms, [flabby upper arms] but that is not the case. Gym and cardio gets rid of excess fat, not excess skin. Liposuction is meant for stubborn diet- and exercise-resistant fat. Sit-ups won't help reduce that type of fat on the tummy."

He said South African men were definitely more open to the idea of plastic surgery for aesthetic

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purposes. "Locality more than the type of person might determine who wants to do this. High-flying execs wanting to look better in the workplace would be more open to it, versus a Free State farmer or game ranger who loves his weathered skin."

Patel said those with narcissistic complexes or who have unrealistic expectations were excluded from surgery at the psychological-assessment stage. "There are a certain proportion of men who want to look like they have got a body builder-type of chest and that is not what the surgery or result entails. We have to screen patients carefully."

For those who do have the treatment, it is a confidence booster. "The patients feel great that they no longer have to be aware of this issue, which they might have thought about for a long time. Whether it is a perceived problem or not, it is real for them. Love handles or muffin tops, or in older men, the eye bags, they feel better after the procedure."

Mia said that some surgeries were functional. "For some patients with prominent drooping eyelids, the motivation is that they cannot see properly. Others with prominent bags may get weary of questions of whether they are sick or tired, and we can correct that quite nicely and easily."

He said patients ranged from teenagers to the elderly, but were generally from the middle- to upper-income group. Many more men would have procedures if they were more affordable, he said. "Many of our patients save up, or finance the surgery over a year or two years."

"What I have seen, which is a little worrying, is an increase in botched procedures, by GPs or

Love handles or muffin tops, or in older men the eye bags... they feel better after the procedure

people not trained to do plastic surgery. Noninvasive liposuction, for instance, does have a degree of surgical elements.

"People need to make sure their surgeon is registered with the correct authorities and associations. They assume a procedure will cost less than it would at a qualified doctor, but that isn't the case and actually the complications can make it more costly," said Mia.

He said plastic surgeons had to field some strange requests, such as insertion of silicone beads under

penile skin. "We don't do these sorts of things, which could be dangerous. And we have to be careful of men who see things in the media and ask for them."

"Patients have to be counselled, for instance how rhinoplasty on a female nose won't work on them, or making the nose too thin would look odd."

Dr Daniel Sister, a provider of cosmetic treatments in the UK, confirmed the trend: "Without a doubt, men are getting more work done... We're living longer, we're having second and third marriages and it's become so acceptable for men to take a greater interest in their looks."

"But perhaps the biggest motivator for 50-something men is the job market, which is youth-driven. These men don't want to get left behind. If they're in a client-facing job, or competing with younger colleagues, there's a commercial edge to looking a bit younger. Banking in particular is very competitive. In the past, a middle-aged man would proudly have a paunch, now he might get Botox." — *Additional reporting by The Daily Telegraph, London*

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There is one example of his-and-hers space that trumps the rest, though, as property agent Giles Barrett recalls. "I went along to a penthouse valuation to meet a married couple and at the end, the wife asked me if I could see her apartment. Slightly confused and short of time, I asked if we could schedule a separate appointment, but it transpired that the wife's apartment was actually the penthouse next door," says Barrett. "They were very happily married but living in adjoining penthouses. Hers was a mix of Art Deco and Impressionist art, his was super-masculine with lots of dark colours and leather."

Now that surely is most married couples' idea of his-and-hers paradise. — *The Daily Telegraph, London*

THE more money we have, the less we want to share space in our home with our partners — or at least that's the way it seems when you walk around the homes of the super-rich. Where once having twin sinks seemed a sign of luxury, now his-and-hers bathrooms are the norm in high-end new homes; and separate dressing rooms, studies, hobby rooms and master bedrooms are on the rise.

Some properties are taking this gender division a step further.

A development in London's Greenwich Millennium Village has 12 split-level apartments with "his-and-hers balconies".

The two top-floor bedrooms each have a separate terrace: "hers" with three scooped fabric armchairs, a matching sunbed and side table

Separate wings give super-rich couples space to fly

calling out for a bottle of fizz, while his terrace is designed for activity, with 20 hexagonal planters to tend and an armchair when he collapses.

Meanwhile in Frensham in Surrey, a country mansion on sale for £19-million (R320-million) — comes with "his-and-hers swimming pools". As estate agent Alex Newall explains: "The Russian owners built a second swimming pool for him as he loves having a really hot *banja* — Russian sauna — then swimming lengths in the fresh air, whatever the weather. "But her view is why would you go swimming outside on a cold day when you can relax in the warmth? So she has her indoor pool, with an

exercise bike submerged in it for water aerobics."

So is this a sign of increased marital discord among the ranks of the rich — or simply the way we would all secretly like to live, if space and money were no object?

His-and-hers spaces have become a luxury hallmark that buyers at this level expect

Neither is in short supply at Millcote, a 1 600m² country house in West Sussex, available to rent for £50 000 a month. There, the lord and lady of the manor can retreat to their respective studies on the ground floor, then retire to the master bedroom suite, which has two private sitting rooms and two en suite bathrooms.

It is generally snoring to blame for the rise in his-and-hers bedrooms.

The British National Sleep Foundation recently found that one in four couples slept in separate bedrooms — and high-end agents report an increase, particularly in country houses, in "snoring rooms"

— a bedroom near the master bedroom for the noisier partner.

"Separate master suites are a sensitive issue, but it's something people will pay a premium for," says Emily Williams, who has designed a penthouse in Bayswater with two master suites on different floors, and with separate entrances. "You could lead totally separate lives," she says. "Separate dressing rooms and bathrooms just make complete sense when both partners are working and their schedules overlap. Who wants to share a bathroom with their husband anyway?"

Estate agent Susannah Odgers agrees that his-and-hers spaces have

become a hallmark of luxury that buyers at this level have come to expect. "When you have the kind of square footage that London's most prestigious homes command, one might as well make the most of the space on offer," says Odgers.

High-end agents report an increase, particularly in country houses, in 'snoring rooms' for the noisier partner

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