

"I was 55 and starting to look old- and it hits you when you are sitting around a boardroom table and everyone else looks younger than you."

"Men don't want the downtime and they don't want people to know that they've had something done," says Lewis.

One problem for which men are increasingly likely to have surgery, however, is gynecomastia or so-called "moobs". According to BAAPS, the number of liposuction procedures to treat the condition is rising steadily and, indeed, more than tripled between 2004, when there were just 53, and 2006, when there were 177. "I perform a lot of male breast reductions," says plastic and reconstructive surgeon and BAAPS member, Dalia Nield. "I've had patients who are in terrible turmoil [as a result of gynecomastia]," says Nield, a former consultant at St Barts.

Dr Elliot Jacobs, who has a practice on Park Avenue in Manhattan and a clientele that is nearly 50 per cent male, believes that up to a third of men are affected by the problem to some degree. "I can't say it's becoming more common but more people are recognising it," says Jacobs, who received 2,000 e-mails from around the world after talking about the problem on an American TV show. "It was a taboo subject," he says. "Like erectile dysfunction, no one talked about it or even acknowledged that it existed until recently. But it affects men both physically and emotionally."

"No one knows exactly what causes it," continues Jacobs, who performs 125 to 150 male breast reductions (from \$6,700, about £3,400) a year, many of them on men who have flown to New York especially. "If the problem appears in the 20s or 30s, possible causes include body-building steroids, medications for high blood pressure or hair loss and some antidepressants, including SSRIs, as well as illegal substances such as marijuana." But the problem, he says, can be easily rectified using a combination of liposuction to remove the soft fatty tissue over the pecs and keyhole incisions to remove the dense tissue behind the nipple. The scarring, he says, is "exquisitely minimal". According to Nield, "cosmetic surgery in these cases can make a huge difference to their lives. It is not just about the superficial stuff."

Droopy brows and eyes and saggy chins and necks are also high on the list of male concerns. "And the only way to deal with those problems," says Dr Cohen, "is with good old-fashioned bright lights and cold steel." This remains anathema to most men. But Dr Laurence Kirwan, a pioneering British-born surgeon known for the quality of his face and neck work reports "a significant increase" in the number of male patients over the past couple of years. "I work on about 50 men a year out of about 400 surgical procedures in total," he says. "The men I see are wealthy, most of them are young - in their 40s and 50s - and they

making business calls. My driver picked me up later that afternoon and I was home, with hoods and bags gone."

As for face-lifts, the key motivator for both sexes, according to Dr Kirwan, is what he refers to as "laxity". "People's tolerance for it is zero," he says. "It is very ageing when the cheeks start to drop and jowls start to form around the mouth. Or else, all of that is looking great and the neck collapses." The aesthetic and technique for lifting a man's face, says Kirwan, is different from that for a woman. "With women we lift up; with men we lift the neck but pull back around the cheekbones as it gives a more masculine look," he says. Kirwan, who is often called upon to teach his techniques to his peers, has a special procedure for lifting and smoothing the neck which involves detaching the skin down to the bottom of the neck and from the ear to ear so as to re-drape the skin, "rather like shaking out a sheet and laying it on a bed". It also involves an incision under the chin to stitch the vertical bands of platysma muscle together and, if necessary, he will also include a chin implant to give a stronger jawline.

"You have to be very motivated to have a face-lift," says a 60-year-old, former lawyer turned multimillionaire business entrepreneur in the US. "But if you have looked in the mirror for five or 10 years at something you don't like, I would say you are the ideal candidate. In my case it was the bags under my eyes that bothered me, because I had survived for so long on four hours' sleep a night. I had them removed and the sagging skin around my neck was tightened up. It was definitely worth it."

Still, surgeons admit that the man in search of a full face-lift is a very rare thing. So if you are wondering how that colleague sitting across the boardroom table manages to stay looking so youthful despite his punishing lifestyle, it's unlikely to be anything to do with the scalpel. But the syringe? Well, that's a different matter. ♦

THE YOUNG PRETENDERS

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how to spend it

