

# Beware of black market cosmeceuticals



By **Leslie Morgan**, OBE DL  
CEO, Durbin PLC  
Leslie Morgan is a Fellow of the Royal  
Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

The growing popularity of cosmetic procedures is becoming increasing impossible to ignore due to its high profile on TV, social media, the internet and as a hot topic in general conversation. It has been said that the global cosmetics market will reach \$61 billion by 2020. The most popular cosmetic procedures in the Middle East are liposuction, breast augmentation, abdominoplasty and rhinoplasty. This rising trend is not limited to women, in fact The Emirates Medical Association has established that 47% of all cosmetic surgery patients in the UAE are indeed men. Evidently the need to have sculptured torsos, defined muscles and the 'perfect face', is increasingly appealing to the male population just as much as women in the Middle East.

I find myself being curious as to what has made cosmetic surgery and non-surgical treatments so popular? Is it all for vanity, health or beauty purposes? It is clear to say this revolution has taken over the way beauty is perceived and can even become an addiction to some. Research in Oman has shown that liposuction and abdominoplasty are more likely to be chosen over diet or ex-

ercise, with a thriving number of overweight people opting for one of these surgeries. Whilst some recruit surgeons to remove excess fat from their bodies completely, many now request the fat to be removed and injected elsewhere to enhance other areas, for instance the buttocks. With no chemicals injected in this procedure, as there are with many other enhancing surgeries, fat transfer has become more favourable.

A huge number of male and female patients are opting for smaller noses in a bid to look 'more desirable'. Nearly 40,000 cosmetic surgeries take place in Iran each year - 60% of these are rhinoplasty and have led to Tehran being dubbed the 'nose job' capital of the world. While new less invasive surgeries are constantly being introduced, there is a growing and undeniable demand for non-invasive cosmetic procedures. Fast evolving technologies means Botox and dermal fillers have become such a quick process that there is little downtime. Indeed, so quick, that women and men are popping to their local clinic with ease for a readily available procedure - even during lunch breaks! Although there are many beauty products that claim to improve the appearance of ageing and enhancing features (e.g. lips, eyes and cheeks), cosmetic surgery is somewhat more of an effective way to achieve the desired look for instant, longer-term results.

As a quick-fix to treat signs of ageing, Botox is by far the most popular procedure and has many alternative health purposes. Botox helps patients recover from medical disorders such as hyperhidrosis, migraines, bruxism and more. For hyperhidrosis, using Botox reduces sweat produced by the body by preventing the muscles from contracting. This may be beneficial to many living in the region as temperatures can reach as high as 45°C. The same process is used to reduce oily looking skin by cutting down excess production of sebum that is released; these require regular treatments

and are never a one-off fix.

As with every type of business, the same services are offered on the black market at a much lower cost but the associated risks here are much higher. Botched jobs, product sourced from unregulated suppliers, unsanitary conditions, a lack of medical knowledge, no insurance and no after-care are just a few examples that can cause huge complications. Quality cosmetic treatments can cost the customer thousands of dollars, which is merely a drop in the ocean for the wealthy. However, many others save up for smaller procedures, which are not as expensive, such as facial injections. With competitive prices, there will always be a risk of unlicensed cosmetic surgery. That's why with over 50 years' experience Durbin understands the need for quality-assured cosmeceuticals in the industry. We have built up a global network of reliable suppliers and supply cosmetic fillers, disposables and surgical equipment at great competitive prices, but never with a compromise on quality. **MEH**

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- Web address: [www.durbinglobal.com](http://www.durbinglobal.com)
- Email: [bd@durbinglobal.com](mailto:bd@durbinglobal.com)