

Let's face it, it often comes down to looking good and looking younger.

Welcome to SBH Bronx Health Talk produced by SBH Health System and broadcast from the beautiful studios at St. Barnabas Hospital in the Bronx. I'm Steven Clark.

Once reserved for the rich and famous, cosmetic surgery has undergone its own facelift in recent years. Due to the advent of new technologies and products. Plastic Surgeons today offer more affordable and less invasive procedures to enhance the face and the body. In fact, according to the most recent report from The American Society of Plastic Surgeons the total number of minimally invasive cosmetic treatments have gone up more than 220 percent over the last decade. With me to discuss this phenomena today is Dr. Franziska Huettner, a double board certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon with SBH Health System. Dr. Huettner specializes in both aesthetic and breast surgery. With her today is Melissa Gagliano Mejia who is her physician assistant. Welcome ladies.

Well let's start out Dr. Huettner by discussing two things that fall under the non-invasive cosmetic category: Botox and fillers. What are they? How are they similar? How are they different?

Well Botox and fillers are two completely different entities and sometimes patients come to the office asking for Botox but really needing filler and vice versa. So Botox is the brand name for basically a toxin that is used to paralyze muscles and so it's being injected into the certain muscles of the face to prevent wrinkle formation like forehead lines as well as clabella, the well-known eleven lines between the eyes as well as on the side of the eyes like the laugh lines so that Botox is commonly used for these areas as well as other areas. Now fillers on the other hand are products that are injected to restore volume and enhance the contour of the face for leader symmetries of the face or just to enhance certain areas like the cheekbones and to look more youthful as we mature with age, since we don't age, we mature, so unfortunately grab the wins over time and when you look at patients pictures often when they are younger they have more volume in their cheekbones and then over time that sort of fades a little bit away in order to restore that and giving the patient a more youthful appearance that's what fillers are used for or the nasolabial fold the fold between

the nose and the mouth that often is being injected and it's really broadly used in the face and Botox and fillers have been rising and really really being used more and more over the last decade than they ever have been.

I understand we talked about Botox first now you're seeing patients in their 20s right?

That is correct that is correct. So it's no longer a product just being used for the more mature patient it's actually a big push also for injection in younger patient just as a preventive measure because let's face it we move our face like thousands of times during the day so the wrinkles formed because of repetitive muscle movement of the forehead and the laugh lines and once those lines have formed in the skin they're really not that easily to get rid of so in order to even prevent from these lines of forming injection of Botox can help with that. So even at a younger generation we do see it more frequently the injection and then let's face it we live in the day and age now of Instagram and social media and it's being promoted all over the internet and Instagram of like you know influencers and you know famous people that we follow and that we see it all over that are using it broadly so the use of it really has much more shifted from what was reserved for like a certain population to really broad and wide use of these products.

When you say preventive you mean that if you use Botox at the age of 25 maybe you're not going to be as wrinkled as you may normally be at 45 or 55 right?

That is correct. That is the intention that basically this skin doesn't wrinkle as much, the creases don't form because the muscle movement underneath cannot take place.

Okay so again with the fillers those are usually older audience typically?

Not necessarily, no. So we see it for really in all age groups. I treat patients in their 20s, treat patients in their 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s. It really depends on what they want to achieve you know with the filler product. The amount differs that we're injecting and that we're using and also what the goal of the patient is. Very commonly used are fillers and hence the lip volume I see that very commonly in

the younger population or to just define a little bit the cheek area to have a nice landing zone for the makeup and then it shifts a little bit into the more mature population of like deeper furrows of like really restoring mid face volume that has been recessed and has gone over time so but fillers are being used all across all age groups really.

How long does Botox and how long do fillers typically last?

So Botox I want to also say Botox is only one of the medications used there are others that are also on the market and they basically do the same thing but Botox is the brand name of the most common and popular used toxin that we're injecting. So the neurotoxins they last about between three to five months. It depends sometimes in men that have really hyperactive muscles and really strong muscles sometimes they burn through the product a little bit faster so that I see them back after like sometimes two to three months that it's not lasting as long but usually we say between three to five months for the toxins and then the fillers depend on what type of fillers so there are different type of fillers and the I would say roughly you can say between 12 and 24 months depending on the fillers. There are also different type of fillers, there like permanent fillers and they're like absorbable fillers and I prefer to use HA fillers which are basically absorbable that basically will go away after time.

OK, Melissa let me ask you this question get you involved in here you mentioned you know male patients too - what's the breakdown of the patients that Dr. Huettner sees typically male versus female

So in terms of even just non cosmetic patients there are patients who you see in the clinic for gynecomastia which is just an overgrowth of the breast tissue. Patients who are male will also be seen for overhanging skin in the belly yes so

What again what percentage of men?

There's a good percentage of men. I'm not certain exactly on the percentage but there are definitely a good number of male patients that are being seen for various procedures.

Dr. Huettner, when you started were there fewer male patients than there are today?

So I would say about a decade ago I seen less male patients that I see now. I think definitely the male population has grown and they are very particular in what they are asking for and man as much as women you know want to look good. They want to feel good and they really want to be the best version of themselves. There's no difference between men and female.

So you're seeing your male patients at a young age as well?

Yes I do. There's a huge you know self-awareness of looks and I have to say these days with Instagram and social media there's of course a positive but also sometimes a little bit of a negative sight because a lot of the pictures we do see are, they're manipulated with certain filters and they're photo shopped and so unfortunately it presents this like perfect look of people that then patients come in and ask for which is often not really a representation of the reality and so it comes then to the provider to have a really informative conversation with the patient about for that particular person because everybody is unique so there's no cookie cutter approach for injectables, for any type of surgery. Every patient is unique and I have a very individual discussion with every patient about anything that I do to develop a plan.

I think the reality is important point to discuss because I mean you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear and I wonder if people go to a plastic surgeon for A cosmetic procedure and they say you know what you're gonna totally change my life. I've been an ugly duckling and now I'm going to be a movie star. I mean there's got to be certain based reality right?

Of course, it has to always be a reality with it and patients often don't come so much and ask for a complete makeover or that I make them into a different person. I think that's more like for the Hollywood and movie industry, but we can really change people's life with plastic and reconstructive surgery and so I see it as a huge gift and privilege to actually care for my patients and to be part of their journey of whatever transformation they want to go through. I also see a huge

population of weight loss patients that achieve that with either surgical or non-surgical means and so then to be part of their final step their journey of after they lost the weight and removed a skin and to really make them feel better about themselves. It's a huge privilege.

That's just one of the areas that's something I wanted to talk to you about. I know SBH has a growing bariatric surgery center and many of these patients I guess are being directed to you after they've lost 150 or 180, 200 pounds right?

Absolutely and we try to get involved with the patient actually even before they lost all the weight, just to like talk about what is potentially possible in the future after they lost the weight and also to talk about with them a timeline: How long do they have to be stable in their weight after they lost it, when would surgery be indicated, what to pay attention and what would make them a good candidate and what not and when we see those massive weight loss patients, they often have not just one area that they want to have address so we need to talk about surgical planning. What all can be done in one surgery, what should be staged and then not to forget about the financial aspect because a lot of these procedures are actually not covered by insurance. A lot of patients are like they don't see it as a fair process. Unfortunately the reality that the insurance companies only cover certain abdominal procedures, but when we talk about the arms or when we talk about reshaping of the breasts of the massive weight loss, unfortunately a lot of those things are not or the thighs not covered so we want to give the patient time to like prepare for that so when the time comes they have saved up and we work very closely with each individual patient to hopefully help them to you know achieve this final goal.

Yeah Melissa let me bring you back in here. Are you seeing that in the Bronx, when patients are coming to see you that they saved up in anticipation of you know one day I want to do cosmetic surgery and I'm saving up X amount per month or per year in order to reach that goal.

Some of them do. You know a lot of times patients come in to be evaluated for what areas would be as Dr. Huettner said before done all at once, you know which ones need to be staged a lot of times. They just want to get an idea of what they can have done or what their candidates for and then the process can

take its course from there. Either they can see if things will be covered under insurance if it's not covered under insurance then they can be provided a quote and that will give them an idea of where they need to be ok financially okay.

Now moving along I know that you specialize in what you call mommy makeovers. What exactly is that?

It's one of my big passion is a mommy makeover and it a very broad term that does not entail only one surgery. It's basically a description of a process of a woman that has given birth and has now concluded her child bearing time in her life and maybe has some excess skin on the tummy and some you know excess fat deposits somewhere or some loose skin, or just want to get back into shape. Often because women breastfeed breasts their shape and also their perkiness so women often come and want to have a better control of down after abdomen at fret of shape of that breast and so I talked to each patient on a very individual basis what their main goals are, what is number one two three priority and there are in their transformation and then develop a specific plan but it can entail liposuction that can entail breast surgery, tummy tuck, it can entail thigh lifts so their arm lifts, so really mommy makeover can entail a lot of different procedures and it's also done staged that there are several procedures that the woman wants to have done and then we combine whatever is the safest for that patient at once and so it's a very individual process but it is very empowering to see women than to really feel really good about themselves afterwards and getting their shape back and yeah feeling good going to the beach.

One area I want to touch on before we leave is patient safety and I know you tell me this before we started the interview today that you hear about patients who are thinking "I'll go to Dominican Republic or I'll go elsewhere I can save a few bucks and it's cheaper" and you're concerned about that, right?

I'm absolutely concerned about it. I guess I do see a wide variety of patients so for one hand I do see reconstructive patients also breast reconstructive patients after cancer that you know we do see in clinic and there was really no discussion about them basically going to a foreign country it's a service that we offer for their cancer care and it's all taken care of here. Now when we talk about cosmetic surgery we do see a lot of medical tourism now, surgical tourism where

patients

basically go into countries like the Dominican Republic to be operated on, stay only there for a short period of time, and then return. And it's often a better price point for them to go but what really concerns me about this is that I really hope patients do their research about the provider that they're going to be seeing there to really ensure that it is a board-certified provider board-certified plastic surgeon to be specific and patients should ask that question. The other thing is to follow up when patients cannot be taken care of by the provider who operated on them that sometimes can be a problem and I do see patients that come from countries like the Dominican Republic have been operated on there and then have a problem and of course these patients need to be taken care of but it's really difficult to do because I often don't know what that provider did there. Also there have been evidence-based studies published that basically on the type of bacteria patients come back with and the type of infections that they come with that's really unusual and often resistant bacterias you know to antibiotic treatment so it causes a whole lot of problem.

Do you see much of that?

don't see a lot of that especially you know also here in the Bronx I do see that and although I understand that patients you know need to be cost aware and you know of having things done but I really want to caution people to just rush to have things done overseas, to process a follow-up long-term care they often come still with their little silicone tubes that they were placed there and then expect me to remove them which you know is really difficult to do in the sense of like I said I don't know what the plan of the surgeon was. I don't know what was done underneath so it brings a whole other slate of questions with it and it is your body so I'm completely supportive of cosmetic surgery. I'm big fan of that every patient should feel their best and feel good about themselves and you know raise awareness that plastic surgery is no longer a hush-hush thing and nobody should talk about it. We should talk about how it's being done safely and we should talk about and raise awareness that there are a lot of providers that are you don't not board certified or there are at a different specialty but then perform procedures that are should only be done by a plastic surgeon so what I can only hope for is that when patients go and seek for provider make sure it's a board-certified plastic surgeon. Don't hesitate, ask questions. Don't feel bad about asking

questions to the provider. It is your body. It is your health and you want to make sure that you're taking care of safely when it comes to that.

You make some very good points. So Melissa let me ask you. Someone wants to make an appointment with Dr. Huettner or wants more information what number should they call?

Well they can call the clinic at SBH I have the phone number to provide that for them at 718-960-1669. We're also very accessible here at SBH. We try to provide access for patients to get in touch with us even directly we do have a service phone number that patients can call us directly at that phone number is 607-296-6636 and that's a way for patients to get in touch with us directly.

Dr. Huettner, Melissa, thank you very much for joining us today on SBH Bronx Health Talk. For more information on services available at SBH Health System visit www.sbhny.org. And thank you for joining us.