

Transcript

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 Compere: **AMANDA BLAIR** Summary ID: **A00025153497**
 Item: **DISCUSSION ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF COSMETIC SURGERY.**
INTERVIEWEES: DANIEL FLEMING, COSMETIC SURGEON

Demographics:	Male 16+	Female 16+	All people	ABs	GBs
	7000	6000	13000	1000	8000

AMANDA BLAIR: It's interesting, you know. We were just talking to Kate Halfpenny from *Who* magazine and she has revealed that Jennifer Aniston has in fact had plastic surgery. And I've wanted to talk about this for a while because I'm interested to know if your thoughts are like mine, because once upon a time I absolutely poo-pooed the idea of plastic surgery. I thought it was ridiculous, I thought that it was - people were being overly vain. I (a) hate the pain. Hate pain of anything, so I was thinking to myself, imagine going through all that pain to look good.

But you know what? I have to admit that as my breasts get closer and closer to my kneecaps, there are times when I am thinking plastic surgery will be the go. And in a few years' time, when I'm over the whole childbirth thing, I reckon I might be heading in to a surgeon.

Give us a call on 8232 0000 if you have - what's our number? 8223 0000, thank you. 8223 0000. I



don't know whose phone number that was that I was giving out. I hope they enjoy it if they get some calls.

But seriously, what do you think about plastic surgery? Have you had plastic surgery? You don't have to give us your real name. If you've had plastic surgery, I'd love to hear from you, or if you are absolutely and completely anti-plastic surgery, or if you've got any stories where you've seen people who have had really dodgy jobs.

I must admit, a friend of mine had her breasts done, and they're quite obviously fake. She's this tiny little thing and she's gone from an A cup to like a double D. So she's gone quite big.

It's interesting. I sort of think there's got to be - there are some cases where it works and some cases where it doesn't work.

This man knows all about cases that works. His name is Daniel Fleming. He is a cosmetic surgeon.

Hi, Daniel.

DANIEL FLEMING: Hello, Amanda.

AMANDA BLAIR: Cosmetic surgery. What's the difference between cosmetic surgery and plastic surgery?



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DANIEL FLEMING: It's pretty straightforward. Think about plastic surgery as dealing with things that are actually wrong with people, pathological conditions - diseases, burns, cancer, birth defects, accidents, that kind of thing. Whereas cosmetic surgery just deals with people who want to either reverse the signs of ageing or change the way they look.

AMANDA BLAIR: So Botox and breast enlargements and lip enhancements and all those sorts of things, they're cosmetic surgery?

DANIEL FLEMING: They are indeed.

AMANDA BLAIR: And what sort of people come to you generally? Can you generalise about your clients?

DANIEL FLEMING: Well, you can generalise and say that in general it's everybody. It used to be the sort of province of the rich and famous, didn't it, years ago, and there was a lot of stigma attached to it. That's all changed in the last 10 to 15 years. And actually, some time ago I did a survey of the occupation groups of my patients, and the commonest occupation group was cleaners, actually.

AMANDA BLAIR: Really?

DANIEL FLEMING: So I think that tells you quite a bit about how our attitudes to cosmetic surgery have changed over the years.



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AMANDA BLAIR: And what's the procedure that you do more than others?

DANIEL FLEMING: Breast implants.

AMANDA BLAIR: Okay. And is there a reason generally? Like, is it - not a reason, obviously they want bigger breasts. I mean, I'm not being, you know, that obvious there. But is it people after the birth of their children and they've lost their breasts? Is it ageing?

DANIEL FLEMING: There's two groups, Amanda, really. There's the people who've never had anything and want it, and there's the people that have had it and lost it and want it back again. So the patients tend to fall into two different age groups: the younger girls who are flat and who have never had children and really want to enhance their bustline, and ladies in their thirties and even up to their sixties, actually, who have had breasts previously and age has taken its toll or breastfeeding has taken its toll and they want a bit of an enhancement to take them back to what they were used to.

AMANDA BLAIR: And do you find that there's a tremendous difference to their psychological condition after they've had this operation?

DANIEL FLEMING: Yes, well, more importantly they find that's the case. In fact, there have been numerous surveys that have looked specifically at breast implants, but also other aspects of cosmetic surgery, and



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somewhere like in excess of 90% of patients report that they have an increased sense of self-esteem. And the word that repeatedly comes out in these surveys is increased confidence.

AMANDA BLAIR:

I know with me, I've always had rather large breasts, and with the children, the more I breastfeed, after every child I'd lose them. They'd sort of go down quite a bit, and I don't necessarily feel like myself. That's why I'd be thinking along the lines of surgery at some point, whereas I never used to. I used to completely poo-poo the idea and thought it was ridiculous.

DANIEL FLEMING:

Yes, well, if I may say so, Amanda, that's a fairly typical change in attitude because before you didn't need any cosmetic surgery or didn't desire any cosmetic surgery because you were happy about the way you looked. Now there is an aspect of your appearance, as you've described, where you're less happy about the way you look and suddenly you're looking at cosmetic surgery in a slightly more positive light.

AMANDA BLAIR:

Daniel, has there ever been a patient that you've refused to operate on or that you have sort of taken aside and said, listen, you don't (a) need the work, or you need less of the work, because I think we've all seen on *A Current Affair* and *Today Tonight*, they've both had stories of, you know, plastic surgery (a) disasters and also people that are going completely over the top with their plastic surgery and have something like 57 operations.



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DANIEL FLEMING: Yes, absolutely, yes. Every week I would see somebody who I would say, look, I really don't think this is the right thing for you. And there's a couple of reasons. One reason is if patients have unrealistic expectations about what can be achieved, and that's an absolute no-no, because the only judge of the success or failure of a cosmetic surgery operation is the patient themselves. If they're happy with it, it's a success, but if they're not, it isn't. So if their expectations can't be matched by the surgery, you have to identify that beforehand in the consultation and politely explain to them that perhaps they shouldn't have the cosmetic surgery.

There's another group of patients who have a specific psychological disorder called body morphic disorder [sic], where they have an obsession about their appearance, and no matter how - whatever is done to them, no matter how much surgery or any other kind of intervention takes place, they will never be happy with their appearance. And those people will need psychiatric help rather than cosmetic surgery help.

AMANDA BLAIR: Does that come from some form of childhood abuse? Where does that come from, that condition?

DANIEL FLEMING: I don't think that there is a recognised pattern that causes it. I think it may be an inherited thing. It may be related to people's previous experiences. But it hasn't really been determined as to why certain people will get it.



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AMANDA BLAIR: Have you seen, since you've been a cosmetic surgeon, have you seen an increase in younger girls wanting surgery?

DANIEL FLEMING: We have, but you have to take that in the context of the increase that's happened across the board. There's an increase in younger girls and in older women as well who want to have cosmetic surgery, and indeed men who want to have cosmetic surgery.

The total number of cosmetic surgery procedures performed in Australia and in the whole of the western world over the last 10 years has risen almost exponentially.

AMANDA BLAIR: But the young girls, I mean, surely there's got to be an age limit. I mean, I've heard of 15 and 16-year-old girls going into surgeons wanting their breasts done.

DANIEL FLEMING: Yes, well, I don't think you'd find many cosmetic surgeons or plastic surgeons willing to perform breast implant surgery on somebody of that age. The youngest person I've ever performed it on is 17. There's a big difference between a 17-year-old who's been fully developed for several years, is clearly not going to develop breasts, has a mature personality, can understand the issues and whose life is being blighted by the fact that she feels like a boy, compared with somebody who comes in just who thinks that this might be a good fashion accessory.

And it's the responsibility of the doctor in the consultation to identify these things.

AMANDA BLAIR: And also probably the parents too.

DANIEL FLEMING: And indeed the parents. And certainly nobody can have surgery without parental consent under the age of 18.

But it really is on a case-by-case basis, and you're particularly assiduous in the younger patients to make sure that they are doing it for the right reasons, their expectations are correct, and indeed they are able to cope with the possibility of complications. Because you must remember, Amanda, that this is surgery. It's not going to get your hair done, and things can and sometimes do go wrong.

AMANDA BLAIR: Well, there was a case in Melbourne, wasn't there, last week where a young lady lost her life after having liposuction? Did you read about that?

DANIEL FLEMING: That's right. Yes, I am aware of that case, and that was a terrible tragedy. The patient died three days after having liposuction. At this stage, we don't know what the cause of death was. It's not been made public and it is subject to an inquest. And so it may be that the death was not in fact even related to her surgery. That's a possibility. On the other hand, it may have been related to her surgery.



And of course, we don't know yet, even if it was related to her surgery, whether or not the plastic surgeon involved was in any way to blame. We have to really wait for the results of that to come out.

But obviously it's a salutary reminder to anybody contemplating cosmetic surgery that there are risks and terrible things can happen. Mercifully, they are very rare, but they can happen.

And so I would urge anybody contemplating an invasive cosmetic surgery procedure to make sure that their doctor is trained and accredited in cosmetic surgery in general and also specifically in the procedure that they're looking for. And they can do that quite easily by going to the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery website where they can check to see if a doctor is in fact accredited or not in the procedure that they want to have done.

AMANDA BLAIR: Do you have the website there?

DANIEL FLEMING: Yes, www.accs.org.au. I'll give you that again, www.accs.org.au.

AMANDA BLAIR: Fantastic. Well, listen, Daniel, thank you so much for joining us today.

Just one thing, one before you go. You know you've got to obviously watch younger girls. What about older women or older people in general too?



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Like, is there an age where you want to start really reconsidering have cosmetic surgery, because the skin gets thinner, doesn't it?

DANIEL FLEMING: No, there's no age limit as such. It depends on the mental - not the mental, I'm sorry, it depends on the physical health of the individual. You know, there are some 80-year-olds who will benefit from some invasive cosmetic surgery procedures and there will be some other patients who are 50 and are simply not fit and well enough to have it done.

So I'll just leave you, if I may, with a little anecdote. I did do a patient in Adelaide some years ago who came to me for laser resurfacing to get rid of lines and wrinkles around the mouth and the chin and so on. And she told me how she was 72 years old and she wanted to have it done and so on and she was a bit worried I might think she was too old. But for the reasons I've explained, that was fine.

We did the procedure, she was very happy with the result. She came back to see me three months later and she said, you know, Doctor, I didn't tell you a bit of a fib, she said, I'm not 72 at all, I'm actually 82, but I knew you wouldn't do it if I said I was 82.

AMANDA BLAIR: Oh, bless her.

DANIEL FLEMING: So, the right procedure for the right patient, there's no age limit.



AMANDA BLAIR: And it works. Okay, well, Daniel Fleming, thank you so much for joining us today and shedding some light on the wonderful world of cosmetic surgery.

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