

Establishing a Cosmetic Surgery Practice

Oral and maxillofacial surgery has celebrated a significant history with many advancements over the years. Although many believe that cosmetic surgery is a relatively new facet of the specialty of oral and maxillofacial surgery, a careful review of the history of oral and maxillofacial surgery reveals that facial aesthetic surgery has been involved since the beginning of this specialty.

The art of oral and maxillofacial surgery began in dental school. We learned the beginning of facial aesthetics and harmony in our dental training. During our surgical residency we also had to understand the aesthetic balances of the face to participate in areas such as trauma reconstruction, orthognathic surgery, and dentoalveolar surgery. Cosmetic handling of the tissues of the head and neck regions are a natural part of our surgical history, and cosmetic surgery should be considered as an essential part of our specialty.

Recently, oral and maxillofacial surgeons have begun to provide more cosmetic facial surgical procedures in their practices. Incorporating cosmetic surgery into one's surgical discipline requires that the surgeon not only understand the surgical principals but also make proper decisions regarding his or her approach to the cosmetic surgical need of each patient. As with any surgical procedure, application in its appropriate form requires an intimate understanding of risks and benefits involved. Training in the discipline of cosmetic surgery is essential.

As you finish your residency program, you soon learn that your education is only beginning. Many of the residency programs currently offer extensive training in facial cosmetic surgery. However, other programs only provide a light exposure to the area of facial cosmetic surgery. If this is the case, additional training must be obtained before electing to offer cosmetic surgery within your practice. This is not unique to oral and maxillofacial surgery, because many surgical disciplines vary in the amount of cosmetic surgery to which residents are exposed.

Each training program must be evaluated carefully, because each surgeon has different approaches to types of training. Each surgeon's personality varies, and certain individuals with different talents may require more training or may require less training than others. It's advisable that a surgeon take the advice of his mentor in determining whether he is ready to proceed on his own.

In the area of cosmetic surgery, there is much sense and understanding of the facial anatomy and surgical planes that must be continually thought through as one proceeds with a surgical technique. If an individual surgeon has limited knowledge or experience in this area and then proceeds with a surgical technique on a fairly infrequent basis, this could lead to a less desirable result. As with anything we do in life such as riding a bicycle, flying an airplane, swinging a golf club, or hitting a tennis ball we must practice those procedures frequently to be fully competent.

A cosmetic surgery patient is different than a medically ill patient who comes to your office for a cure for a disease or for evaluation of a tumor. A cosmetic surgery patient seeks your assistance to help improve his or her quality of life and not quantity of life. A cosmetic surgery patient seeks your assistance purely on an elective basis. Often a cosmetic surgery patient believes a surgical technique will improve his or her appearance and seeks advice from you for this particular procedure.

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About the Author

Taking care of somebody's skin is only one of the main medical treatments at disposal of a plastic surgeon, as a number of noninvasive cosmetic laser procedures have become available to further improve the skin's health and appearance as explained in [chirurgia plastica](#)