

dai plastic

To his friends in his native Cardigan he is simply Dai Plastic, but in the private clinics of Harley Street he is known as one of the UK's leading cosmetic surgeons. As he stars in a new television series, starting tonight, Health Editor Madeleine Bradley asked Dai Davies what makes a good cosmetic surgeon

DURING the morning session of his festively CosbE clinic, Dai Davies told one potential client that he does not believe that she is a candidate for cosmetic surgery. Despite the fact that she's willing to pay to go under the knife:

"It's a bit early from the Guinness Sign but it would be nice to have some young surgeons who are willing to operate on anyone, otherwise almost to the rescue."

It's probably also a bit early from me, one perception of the private world of cosmetic surgery, which many of us still regard as the preserve of the rich, although with several words, who will pay large sums of money to achieve the look they want, regardless of the consequences.

It is getting harder to open cosmetic surgery, or indeed to film. The television schedules are packed with amazing real life programmes featuring ugly duckling to swan-like transformations and the same woman's plastic which recreate these stories in print, are being watched with adverts for clinics up and down the country.

With such intensive marketing, especially in a society which celebrates beauty above almost everything else, cosmetic surgery is starting to be seen by many as a lifestyle proposition and a passport to a happier and better life, especially now that prices have come down – a full face lift, including surgery on the brows and eyelids, costs about £10,000, or even less abroad.

Mr Davies said: "Cosmetic surgery is more available now than it has been – everyone knows someone who has had cosmetic surgery.

"The price, although still high, is more affordable to many people – it has come down and we have a greater disposable income.

"We live in a society where not only appearance, but what you wear and how you wear it is very important. Looks are

important in society.

"We are also an ageing society and many of my patients who want face lifts will tell me that although they are 60, they feel 40 and they want to look that age because they feel that face no longer represents them.

"The stresses and strains put pressure on people in one way or another, and for ladies in their mid 40s, in particular, cosmetic surgery is one way of responding to those pressures.

My Davies wasn't always one of the UK's leading cosmetic surgeons – he worked as a consultant plastic surgeon in the NHS for more than 20 years, after training as a general surgeon before discovering an

interest in hand and breast surgery.

"It said, 'As part of that I did private cosmetic work one day a week, which paid my mortgage and allowed me to live in London.

"Plastic surgery is essentially reconstructive surgery and the techniques are also used in cosmetic surgery – it was a matter of switching from one to another.

"But you don't meet many doctors or surgeons who set out to become a cosmetic surgeon – it's a progression."

He says that, like many other doctors who have left the health service, that he "got a bit backed off" with the NHS. "It would be

followed by countless others as he by his, the specialty went private as NHS funding was either withdrawn or reduced.

The fact that the NHS will no longer pay for most cosmetic treatments – a few are still funded – means that the vast majority is provided within the private sector, and all the training of the future generation is done privately.

Dr Davies, who still has a home in his native Cardigan, and his colleague Nick Percival founded Plastic Surgery Partners in 1998, with the aim of achieving the highest standards of care in cosmetic surgery in the UK.

Although Dr Davies' and

training arm, the Institute of Cosmetic and Reconstructive Surgery – the first cosmetic surgery training programme in the UK to be recognised by the Royal College of Surgeons – the partners train NHS plastic surgery trainees in all aspects of cosmetic surgery.

It is this work which is the focus of the new documentary series Plastic Surgery School, which is broadcast tonight on Discovery Health.

So what makes a good cosmetic surgeon, apart from the obvious steady hand?

"You must never forget that you are a doctor and it's important to be able to tell patients so that surgery is an

appropriate for whatever reason, be it psychological or that their expectations may be too high," Mr Davies said.

"We are trained to do no harm to patients. By agreeing to do an operation we raise people's expectations and we must be able to fulfil them.

"I'd like to think that my reputation has always been that I am an honest person and that I wouldn't operate unless it is in the patient's best interests – that what they are going to gain from an operation outweighs the possible risks.

"On the whole cosmetic surgery in the surgery of millenaires and it is satisfying as the results are always going to



HIGH STANDARDS Harley Street cosmetic surgeon Dai Davies. Picture: Andrew James

a one show, so it has to be effective.

"You also have to have an artistic eye – the idea that we do all sorts of things, but you get to be able to appreciate a good appearance and the friendship between their nose, an and eyes.

"Most of my patients – 99.9% say they don't want anyone to know that they have had surgery, they want something that they can appreciate, but that one else will notice that they had surgery."

He added: "On Monday I did operations on a nose that I might have gone really well. I had a lot of fun of seeing the smile in this young lad after

receiving the bump on his nose. The whole focus of his life changed.

"But this doesn't happen very often. It is uncommon if you have a complication, a serious complication, or if you have done a rhinoplasty and you feel that it didn't go right.

"That that's life as a surgeon – you have to be able to handle the complications as well as the success."

Dr Dai Davies is a consultant plastic surgeon at Plastic Surgery Partners in Harley Street, London, which can be contacted on 020 7733 0000. He also holds fortnightly clinics on Fridays in Cardiff.

The ethos is to provide first-class training

PLASTIC SURGERY SCHOOL follows Nick Percival and Dai Davies, as they face cosmetic surgeons of the future.

The Discovery Health series is based at The Institute of Cosmetic and Reconstructive Surgery – Europe's first dedicated cosmetic surgery academy – and focuses on a group of qualified plastic surgeons as they embark on their hands-on training.

Mr Percival said: "The ethos behind the institute is to provide first class, hands-on training to ensure the highest possible standards are maintained in the industry.

"With an increasing number of people considering and having surgery each year, we hope this show will not only highlight the importance of expert training but also the emphasis we place on patients being fully aware of what to expect both physically and mentally from what is often life-changing surgery."

Plastic Surgery School starts tonight on Discovery Health at 9pm