

## BEAUTY

# FEATURE: Why more and more women are dissolving their fillers.



Whether you're all about it or against it, [non-invasive cosmetic treatments](#) like [anti-wrinkle injections and fillers](#) have just become the new norm. These days it's pretty much on par with getting your nails done or having your hair trimmed. But it's your face, your choice - right?

And while trends come and go (\*smugly inserts [Kylie Jenner's lips](#) here\*), one of the biggest trends within facial cosmetic treatments is the continuous shift toward a desired 'natural' appearance after non-surgical rejuvenation.

According to leading experts in the cosmetic industry, [people don't want to look like Instagram clones](#) anymore.

There is now a growing number of Aussie women having their cosmetic work reversed and either going completely natural or instead seeking 'tweakments' — that is, subtle, often non-surgical procedures that aren't too obvious.

Why? Because the over-done 'fake' look is very much out.

And look, for a society that has faced everything from a pandemic to racial injustice - it doesn't come as a huge surprise that the whole beauty thing means something incredibly different to what it did a year ago.

Makes sense, no?

To get a better understanding of the rise of natural-looking cosmetic treatments and the fall of 'Instagram face', we spoke to cosmetic medical practitioner Dr Andrew Clark from [Mira Clinic](#) and president of [Cosmetic Physicians College of Australasia](#) (CPCA) Dr Michael Molton.

## What's behind the shift to 'natural-looking' cosmetic work?

In case you haven't been slinking around the beauty game as of late, trends like ['skinalism'](#) have very much made healthy-looking, glowing skin the 'in' thing.

And beauty's new natural wave is not only affecting our skincare formulations and our wellbeing routines - it's also changing the way we approach injectables.



ERIN DOCHERTY

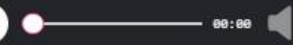
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MAY 6, 2021



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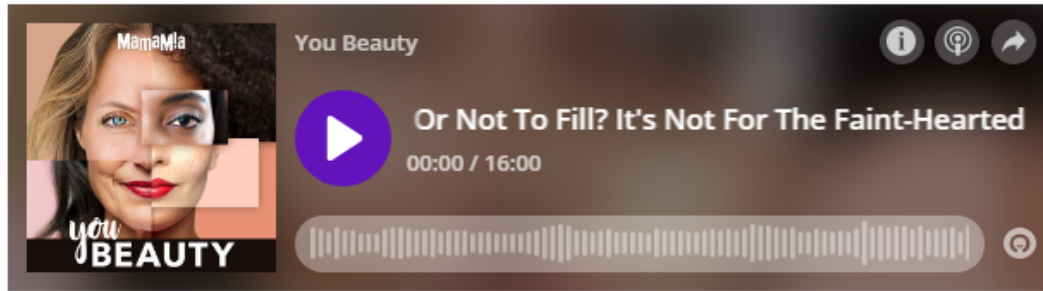


When To Ignore The Professionals

You Beauty

Pronounced filler and overly sculpted faces have now been exchanged for minor 'tweakments' that seek to 'enhance' your natural beauty, not change it.

*Listen: To fill or not to fill? It's not for the faint-hearted. Injectables are big business but it's not a decision to be made lightly. Get your ears on this episode of You Beauty for the straight facts. Post continues below.*



"The ultimate goal for 99 per cent of people visiting a cosmetic medicine clinic is actually to look fresher, with no telltale signs of treatments. You'd be amazed at how many people who look naturally good for their age are actually getting cosmetic treatments," said Dr Clark.

And while you might be thinking it's difficult to hide a cosmetic procedure, these days techniques are way more subtle than you'd probably realise. Bruising, dramatic results and other obvious giveaways are very much becoming a thing of the past, as less-invasive treatments become more and more advanced.

"There is a major shift to 'natural looking' but it may be surprising that the search for 'beauty' is probably not the common motivation for the patients who seek cosmetic medical procedures," said Dr Molton.

Interesting!

"I can honestly say I have never heard 'I want to look beautiful' from any patient. They want to look real, not fake. They see things changing as time passes, but it's not about beauty per se. The shift is to look better, not different. Thankfully, we seem to have moved past trying to look like someone else," adds Dr Molton.

## Why is the 'Instagram face' look out?

While the desire to achieve natural-looking, beautiful results from cosmetic treatments is not necessarily a 'new' thing, Dr Clark said the rise of social media influencers and celebrity culture has played a big role in showcasing 'fake'-looking results.

Enter: 'Instagram face' - the social-media phenomenon dominated by more-is-more reality stars and influencers.

Over the years we've seen young women all over our social media feeds begin to emulate the appearance of celebrities and influencers, attempting to grab hold of the status symbol associated with this kind of look.

"There is a great impact [from influencers] overtly promoting aesthetics that are unachievable," said Dr Clark.

We're talking the carefully sculpted narrow noses, plump lips, high cheekbones and chiselled jawlines. The [almond-shaped eyes](#) and the flawless, pore-less skin. Think Kim Kardashian and Kylie Jenner.

We've even seen this clone-like look trickle onto our television screens and appear on reality shows like *MAFS* (Dr Clark is responsible for reversing ex-contestant Tracey Jewel's cosmetic work) and *The Bachelor* - highlighting how this very distorted and unrealistic expectation of what facial aesthetics look like has become a mainstream thing.

"Before, people only saw unnatural faces in the tabloids and on social media, but now we are seeing unnatural faces everywhere - which is why consumers are so much more aware of what can go wrong," said Dr Clark.

And it's not to say our generation is moving away from specific procedures that create this 'fake' look (minimally invasive procedures like fillers, wrinkle-reducing injectables, and skin treatments are only on the up), but more so the quantity of work being done.

"What has changed in recent years is that more cosmetic medicine is being practiced, and much of it in corporate-owned businesses. I think it's fair to say this has resulted in too many people being encouraged to have treatments they actually don't need," said Dr Clark.

"Cosmetic treatments have become a commodity, just like buying a new pair of shoes. Big businesses are applying their marketing skills to sell more treatments, and I'm worried that not enough effort is being made to ensure that the treatments being bought are helpful or necessary," he adds.

Ethical dilemma, much?

Along with the increasing demand for non-invasive procedures, comes a slew of very inexperienced injectors with relatively little training, something which Dr Clark said gives cosmetic medicine an "unfair reputation".

Another problem is that as cosmetic medicine businesses grow, they struggle to get sufficiently trained and experienced injecting staff.

Dr Clarke said, "Less experienced injectors will use simpler 'one-size-fits-all' style techniques and won't have the ability to use nuance and tailor their treatments."

"Achieving natural looking results requires a huge amount of training and a unique appreciation of proportion. When people get too many injections, especially when placed in the wrong location, it is inevitable that they will develop a look that most of us identify as 'fake'."

## **Just how big is the shift towards natural-looking cosmetic work?**

Well, to put into perspective just how big this movement is, Dr Clark said he is now seeing an influx of clients wanting their cosmetic work either completely dissolved or 'fixed' by a series of more appropriate and tailored injections.

He has even pioneered something called the 'Reverse Makeover' in his clinic, where patients come in and get 'fake' looking or 'botched' cosmetic work fixed, in return for more subtle, natural-looking results.

"A 'Reverse Makeover' is for anyone who feels that their previous dermal filler treatments have left them with a look that they are not happy with. Their lips are too big, their cheeks are too puffy, their smile looks weird, or they simply become aware of things not looking quite right," he explains.

According to Dr Clark, the demand for reversing treatments in his clinic is literally a revolving door.



"The reality is that clinics like mine have never been busier. There are more people getting inappropriate treatments and as a result I have definitely seen a huge increase in people wanting to reverse [them]."

"A few years ago, my clinic would do approximately five dissolving treatments per year. Currently, we are dissolving filler done at other clinics approximately 10 times per month across two clinics."

To give you an idea of what's involved, basically he takes a 3D photograph of the client's face in order to analyse the proportions and identify the flattering and unflattering contours.

"We then use a filler dissolving medication to dissolve away the areas that have too much filler, which can cause things to sag, leaving a sunken, tired appearance," he explains.

"One week later, the patient returns to have new filler re-injected. Only this time the filler injections are done using different techniques and different injection points, restoring volume in a much more harmonious and natural looking manner."

As for the results, "After the reverse makeover, the location of the new filler won't be evident even to the trained eye," said Dr Clark.

However, according to Dr Molton, it's not always as easy as popping in and getting all your 'bad work' and fillers dissolved. It's way more complicated than that.

"It is quite common for skin that has been stretched by these products to be a permanent issue," said Dr Molton.

"Like all procedures, there are risks involved, and dissolving product can cause a serious anaphylaxis reaction in some patients. The unfortunate reality is that some of these botch-ups cannot be fixed at all, let alone 'easily'."

## **Why is there still so much bad cosmetic work out there?**

Well, because the cosmetic industry is still largely unregulated - it's like the Wild West out there.

"Unfortunately, it is not possible to legislate good taste! So I don't think we are ever going to see laws to prevent 'fake' looking results," said Dr Clark.

"But I do think we will see [less] if regulations are improved surrounding the level and type of training practitioners need to complete before they can start doing unsupervised cosmetic medical treatments."

The fact is that the cosmetic industry is riddled with dodgy operators putting people's health at risk.

"Right now there is very little to stop a registered nurse or doctor who has recently done a weekend course in aesthetic medicine to start doing unsupervised cosmetic injections on unsuspecting members of the public."

A weekend course, friends. Not good.

The reality is, until these kinds of regulations are tightened up, people need to spend more time researching reputable clinics and practitioners before booking in for their consultation.

Both our experts stress the need for patients to better educate themselves and become well-informed before letting someone perform a cosmetic treatment on them.

You should *\*always\** look at the credentials, experience and capabilities of who is going to be doing your treatment. It's your face we're talking about here - you don't want to mess around with that.

"Practitioners who create and provide helpful social media content that is balanced, educational, informative and highlights realistic results are to be commended and a good place to start when choosing which clinic to visit," advises Dr Clark.

While patients have definitely become more educated about who they trust to perform a procedure, Dr Molton said we still have a long way to go.

"The Cosmetic Physicians College of Australasia (CPCA) continues to be a key proactive advocate in this regard," he said.

The CPCA have even released a public campaign called '[Get Real](#)' in order to consistently remind Australians that cosmetic medical procedures are just that - medical procedures.

"These procedures involve real prescription-only medications and devices which can make a real difference to people's lives when performed by trained and experienced health practitioners," adds Dr Molton.

"Alternatively, these medicines and devices carry real risks and complications which are magnified significantly when administered by people who have little or no training or experience in their use."

*What do you think of the shift towards 'natural' cosmetic treatments? Share your thoughts with us in the comment section below.*

*For more from Erin, follow her on [Instagram](#).*

*Feature image: Getty*