

**B**eautiful people find it easier to get a job, and once in work they're offered better employment packages than plainer folk! That's according to a study published in the New York Academy of Sciences. When someone is viewed as attractive, they are assumed to have more positive social skills and greater intelligence, according to the authors of the study, which is known as the 'halo effect.' So is it little wonder that in a world obsessed with beauty and perfection, we have seen a sharp rise in non-surgical cosmetic treatments such as botox and fillers.

Botox has become a household name — almost three million doses were shot into foreheads and crow's feet in the United States last year, and here at home it is just as popular as it is stateside. Despite the economic downturn, women and some men are continuing to beat a path to their Doctor Botox in order to appear younger and more beautiful.

Botox is the business of Dr. Danielle Meagher, proprietor of DermaDental Face Clinic, who is also well-known for her many TV appearances, including Channel 4's '50 Plastic Surgery Shockers' — charting the most jaw-dropping, weird and freaky plastic surgery tales from around the world. So how come, we wondered, can so many people get it so spectacularly wrong? Contributor to the show Danielle gave us her verdict: "It was a great show to work on," she says, "as essentially all 50 people featured were fairly shocking! I think poor Leslie Ashe is one of the worst, but then she opted for a treatment carried out by a friend's mother in her own flat and not in a clinical setting. She ended up having liquid silicone injected into her lips, which cannot be removed, and her case is such a good example of how not to do things."

Scary stuff indeed, and it proves how important it is to veer away from the DIY products that are readily available on the Internet, and stick with tried and tested, qualified doctors with state-of-the-art clinics. Irish women have taken to botox like the proverbial duck to water, but there remains a mystique and veil of secrecy around it that doesn't allow the anti-ageing secret agent to be discussed at the water cooler, in the office or at the school gate. Women are now remaining fresh-faced well into their 40s and 50s, but most still refuse to own up to a needle job, instead putting their Peter Pan looks down to good genes or miracle creams.

Few if any celebrities admit to ever having had botox or fillers, with the refreshing exception of Amanda Brunker, so why does it remain so hush-hush? "Irish women tell nobody, absolutely nobody, not even their husbands if they've had work done," says Danielle. "I would like to think I would get some word-of-mouth recommendations, but I think you are spot on, most women do not tell a soul, which is a pity. I'm sure many women considering botox for the first time would love to have somebody recommended to them by a friend who has already attended a really good clinic. Because of the whole privacy issue, at my clinic we never send out emails and we only ever phone people on their personal mobiles. Our premises are so discreet, we don't even have a sign on the door! All appointments are spread out so patients don't bump into other patients and I have a very small team of private secretaries. I won't let anybody else work on my patients, because I know how important privacy is to them."

The pretty Dr. Botox has no such inhibitions herself. Danielle readily admits to being a fan of youth-enhancing treatments and the feel-good factor that she gets from them. "I started having botox when I was 28 for migraines," she says, "although people may not realise that having botox in the forehead every five months can be a real cure for these headaches. I used to suffer terribly from migraines, which I think stemmed from a decade of studying and doing exams. These days I also have the crow's feet at the side of my

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Black empire line dress Nijou, Sth Anne Street, €256  
Silver croc peep toe shoe, Fitzpatrick's shoes, Grafton St., €190  
Gunmetal crystal oval earrings @ Chica, Westbury Mall, €35  
White and gold ring @ Chica, Westbury Mall, €55

eyes treated every five months. I have also had my lips done and my nasolabial lines (lines from corner of nose to corner of mouth) treated. These look awful on me if I don't get them treated every 18 months. I would hope that potential patients would look at my face and think that I look very natural, and that they wouldn't mind having the same look that I have."

But what about something a bit more drastic? Would Dr. D ever consider a facelift, even when she gets older and her facial muscles elongate, droop and age her, as gravity begins to take its toll? "I will never need a facelift as I have botox and facial fillers so all my treatments have been preventative. I have had botox about five times over past two and a half years, and even now I rarely need a top up because the habit of frowning has been broken and the lines really don't come back as bad. A facelift is really invasive and I would be terrified of surgery, so it is just as well that we women of Ireland have access to all these great non-surgical treatments because this way we will never need facelifts!"

Okay, so we may not need a facelift but what about other areas such as the neck and décolletage, as these can be instant reality checks for someone who is trying to look younger? Most women spend a lot of time worrying about what their face looks like, but very often forget about other tell-tale bits! So how can a woman avoid looking 30-something in the face and 50-something below the face. "I think that the best treatment for décolletage is a TCA Chemical Peel, and for the neck, botox along the jaw line or along the platysma bands (those long thread bands running down the neck). However the real key is to wear sunscreen all the

time, even in winter. I would recommend factor 30 minimum, but I wear factor 50 on my face and always wear a big hat in the sun and keep my head and neck under the sun umbrella. Worry not if you do stress about your neck or décolletage as there are many treatments, but each is specific to the type of ageing/sun-damage on each individual. Hands are another giveaway area — you need look no further than Madonna."

There have been reports of women as young as 20 getting botox in the US, in what doctors there describe as the 'Angelina Jolie effect', as younger patients who want to have their mouths pumped up in imitation of the pillow-lipped actress get botox at the same time to prevent any lines appearing. We're living in a time where we're very much driven by beautiful people who are flawlessly air-brushed. However you won't find any 20-year-olds getting botox at the DermaDental Face Clinic, nor will you find Danielle commenting on people's appearances. "I certainly wouldn't be entertaining this and would categorically not treat a patient aged 20 for cosmetic botox, and thankfully I don't have demand for it from girls this young. I think any woman in her 30s, 40s, 50s or 60s is perfectly entitled to have some non-surgical, non-invasive work done, whether they are working in television or in Tesco. If I am really honest, most of the time, if I am walking around town I don't even look at faces, however if I am introduced to someone I cannot help doing a quick once over and it takes all of about 10 seconds for me to draw up a treatment plan in my head — I can't help it. That