

nose

revision rhinoplasty

Sydney facial plastic surgeon **Dr Michael Zacharia** explains revision rhinoplasty. Francis Herron reports.

S Sydney facial plastic surgeon Dr Michael Zacharia explains that ideally rhinoplasty is a procedure to change both the internal function and external shape of the nose. Unfortunately, there are some people who have had rhinoplasty performed by a well-intentioned surgeon but are unhappy with their final result.

'This is because the surgeon may not have taken away enough tissue to achieve the desired change in the nose, or, more commonly, the surgeon may have taken away too much tissue, thus leaving external nasal deformities that have become quite unsightly,' he says. 'As well as this, there is the internal matter of nasal obstruction and sinus problems following some nasal surgery.'

Dr Zacharia says rhinoplasty is one of the most difficult cosmetic procedures to perform, and the surgeon needs to be skilled in this type of procedure. Having training in ear, nose and throat surgery and also external cosmetic surgery in the facial area specifically is a positive indication for achieving a good aesthetic and functional result.

'When it comes to a patient making the decision to have revision surgery, there are several considerations that must be taken into account. First of all, the patient is usually apprehensive about having further surgery because they have invested time and money in having an initial procedure and have not been satisfied. Often a patient will present who is not confident in their previous surgeon and, in fact, have elected not to return for a follow-up visit because of their dissatisfaction.'

He says an inadequate result is often due to a combination of poor communication between the doctor and patient and, either an over-conservative or over-zealous surgery being performed. The main point here is

that at the consultation the patient should feel comfortable with the surgeon and confident that he or she can adequately perform the changes they desire.

At times the surgeon may have to tell the patient that certain outcomes cannot be achieved, and sometimes that the results the patient wants cannot be achieved. For this reason, Dr Zacharia says it is essential to have a discussion using digital photo imaging to show the patient exactly what can and cannot be achieved.

Often the patient who has undergone previous rhinoplasty surgery is concerned about their experience of the effects of the anaesthetic and discomfort following surgery, and they are worried about making the same mistake again and having to spend more money to correct a problem that they were not expecting.

'Most patients will complain that they are either not looking better after their rhinoplasty surgery or that they are, in fact, looking worse than prior to initial surgery.'

Revision rhinoplasty surgery should be performed by a surgeon who is competent in rhinoplasty surgery in general. In Dr Zacharia's practice almost 50 percent of the surgery performed is revisions.

He says it is essential to understand the anatomy of the nose to be able to determine exactly what has gone wrong in the previous surgery. Sometimes a subtle change is required to the external aspect of the nose, and/or more rigorous changes that need to occur with the internal aspect of the nose as well.

'It is important when performing revision rhinoplasty that the patient is made aware of the realistic outcomes of such surgery, and it is necessary that the surgeon understands exactly what the patient is concerned about after their previous surgery. Most importantly the patient should be aware of the difficulties of performing revision surgery.'

After primary rhinoplasty surgery the probability of having a second procedure to correct any minor deformities is approximately 10 percent. After already having a rhinoplasty performed and then requiring a second procedure, the touch-up revision rate increases to 20 percent to 25 percent. Quite often the revision rhinoplasty surgery must be performed through an external incision, to lift the skin envelope of the nose to reveal exactly what the previous surgeon has done,

especially if this information is not readily available to the patient.

'Revision rhinoplasty is a very difficult procedure, both emotionally for the patient and technically for the surgeon but, more often than not, excellent outcomes both functionally and cosmetically can be achieved as long as there are realistic expectations on the patient's behalf and good communication between patient and surgeon,' Dr Zacharia concludes. **acsm**

