

## Feature Article

### Consulting Room™ 2012 Website Statistics

Unfortunately, the UK does not have a central body tracking the UK aesthetic and cosmetic industries, but instead relies on data auditing and reporting from the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS) and the larger cosmetic surgery chains such as The Hospital Group and Transform who regularly report on their numbers, along with market research gatherers such as Mintel who tend to produce a trend report every 3 to 5 years.

This however, all tends to reflect the data for the surgical side of the industry, with analysis of the non-surgical marketplace somewhat lacking, leading to guesstimates from various sources.

Statistics that we have derived from analysing pages viewed and searches made within The Consulting Room™ provide a unique view of what the average consumer is researching, the effect the media and new product/device/procedure introduction has on this and also which products/treatments they may actually be seeking to undertake by finding a local provider offering the service.

From January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 just over 1 million unique visitors came to [www.consultingroom.com](http://www.consultingroom.com). This figure shows the consist levels of web traffic being received by the site as we enter our tenth year online.

In general, our nine year traffic performance continues to show a healthy long term trend for the site and of course demonstrates the growth since our launch in May 2003 when the aesthetic and cosmetic industries were just starting to become part of mainstream awareness.



The visitor data for the last few years had indeed remained relatively stable, despite widespread economic concerns which is affecting general consumer spending, alongside scandals which have, and continue to plague the cosmetic industry and affect consumer confidence in medical professionals and regulators, with health scares for both breast implants and dermal fillers hitting the tabloids and TV screens during 2012.

With consistent numbers of visitors to The Consulting Room™ during the last twelve months, in line with 2010 and following a reduction in 2011, we can only conclude that the public appetite for and desire to spend money on cosmetic enhancements has returned. This of course follows another dip in our numbers during 2008 and 2009 (during the global financial banking crisis) which saw global cosmetic surgery auditing figures fall sharply. In fact, these more recent figures highlighting an increase in our traffic would seem to fly in the face of current government talk of a continued widespread recession which they claim is putting the padlock on people's wallets.

Perhaps the continued media focus, including celebrity and reality TV star endorsements for cosmetic surgery, weekly write-ups on 'new' treatments in glossy magazines and daily newspapers, alongside more social acceptance, is maintaining the public confidence and the desire to spend on luxuries such as beauty and anti-ageing treatments as well as more expensive elective cosmetic surgery, despite the apparent scandals. Reports and surveys show that the younger population is more keen than ever before to go 'under the knife' or rid themselves of chores such as shaving and waxing by embracing cosmetic treatment options now widely available to them.

Of course, the spending power of the baby-boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) must not be ignored. With the oldest now reaching their mid-sixties and the youngest fast approaching the big 50 – this population has savings to spend and a desire not to be put on the 'scrap heap' just yet!

## What Treatments Are People Researching

As statistics concerning the UK market place are lacking, we believe that our breakdown of statistics is one of the most authoritative in terms of reflecting the UK consumer's interest in different cosmetic procedures marketed in this country. We have delved deeper into our 2012 website statistics to give you a broader idea of what a Consulting Room™ user is actually looking for on the website.

We wanted to find out which treatments/procedures visitors are looking at most often, in terms of researching treatment options available to them by looking at page views from our [Treatment FAQs](#) section; this helps us see which procedures are most popularly researched by our visitors.

In total, just under 700,000 of our total annual site visitors viewed our various Treatment and Product FAQ information during 2012.

The top fifteen most popular Treatment/Procedure FAQs were as follows:

1. Laser & IPL Hair Removal
2. Radiofrequency for Facial Rejuvenation
3. Penile Augmentation Surgery
4. Laser Tattoo Removal
5. Dermal Fillers
6. Vaginal Surgery
7. Fractional Laser Skin Resurfacing
8. Microdermabrasion
9. Ultrasonic Body Contouring
10. Specialist Skin Cream
11. Laser & IPL Skin Rejuvenation
12. Chemical Peels
13. Radiofrequency for Cellulite & Fat
14. Medical Skin Needling
15. Umbilicoplasty (Belly Button Surgery)

The top ten most popular Product FAQs were as follows:

1. Pixel
2. Teosyal
3. Restylane Vital
4. Belotero
5. Accent
6. Dermaceutic Peels
7. Thermage CPT
8. Juvederm Ultra
9. Eurosilicone Breast Implants
10. Restylane (Perlane & SubQ)

## Clinic Searches

Those taking the final step and searching our database for a clinic or practitioner providing a specific treatment, procedure or product in a geographical location (within the UK & Ireland) were significantly higher than ever before in 2012.

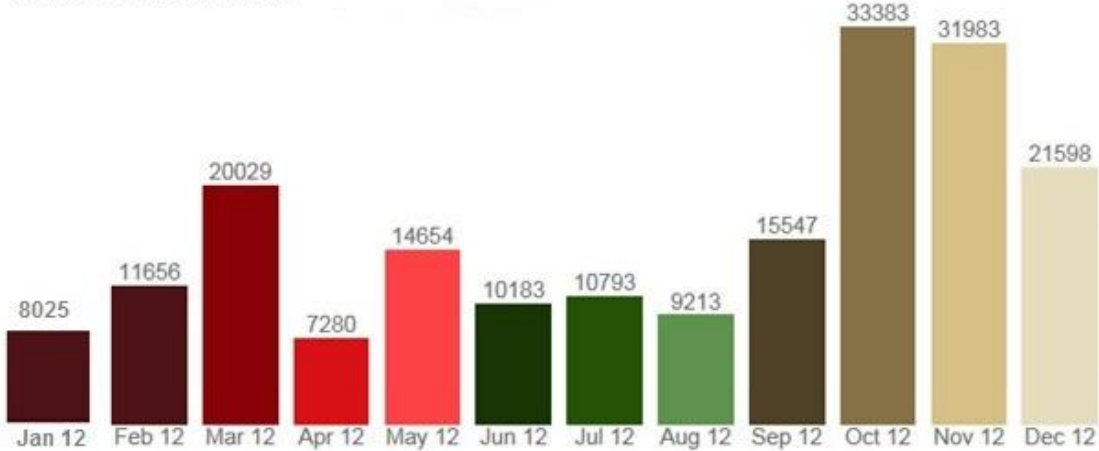
With our search directory allowing visitors to find clinics by a variety of methods, including business classification, products, treatments, towns, which treatment areas and postcode; 2012 saw a total of over 1.13 million searches for clinics and practitioners in the UK & Ireland using these various parameters (figures for 2010 were approximately 300,000 and 500,000 in 2011).

This means that the number of clinic searches performed on The Consulting Room™ has more than doubled in a year! You will no doubt have seen this reflected in the number of referrals generated by us for your business as consumers truly shop around and get comparative quotes and information from various service providers in their area.

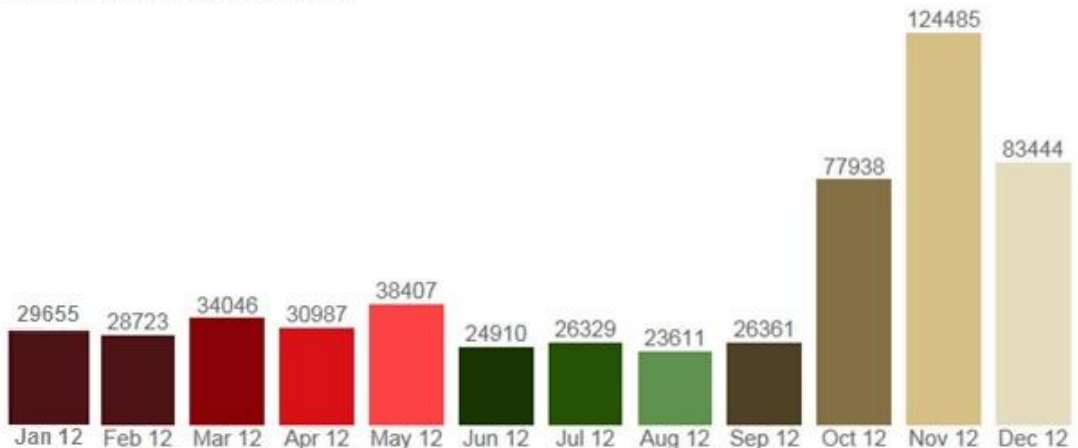
With many changes having taken place in the wider Internet during recent years, particularly in the way that Google™ (the world's largest search engine) ranks web content and the value which is places on the information that it finds on an individual site, for those more technically minded amongst you we are referring to Penguin and Panda updates; 2012 also saw us upgrade some areas of the site to adapt to the newer optimisation requirements, which, as we move into 2013, are creating a faster and better search engine optimised service for those looking for (and finding) providers of aesthetic treatments and products.

The uplift in our traffic statistics following the roll out of changes during the Autumn of 2012 (as demonstrated in the following charts) shows the significant affect that recent upgrades and SEO changes to the [Clinic Search](#) pages is having to our organically generated website traffic. Some of the underlying changes have also been rolled out to other areas of the website to improve organic search engine traffic flow. We expect this to grow exponentially into 2013, as we continue to monitor our performance and make changes where applicable.

Clinic Town Searches



Clinic Treatment Searches



Breaking this data down even further we are able to see which are the most popular treatments/procedures and products that visitors are searching The Consulting Room™ database to find service providers for.

This is a useful comparison with the data on popularly researched Treatment and Product FAQs featured above as, although many people will be interested and motivated to read about and research options which may be suitable for them, we all know that many others will simply visit the site and immediately search for a clinic based on what they 'want', without embarking on any research first. This is borne out in the differences in the most popular clinic searches by treatment and product search selections.

The top fifteen most popular clinic searches by treatment or procedure during 2012 were as follows:

1. Laser & IPL Hair Removal
2. Microdermabrasion
3. Dermal Fillers
4. Botulinum Toxin
5. Vaginal Surgery
6. Laser / IPL Treatment Pigmented/Vascular Problems
7. Breast Implants
8. Abdominoplasty (Tummy Tuck)
9. Liposuction
10. Sclerotherapy and Microsclerotherapy
11. Chemical Peels
12. Laser and IPL Skin Rejuvenation
13. Laser Tattoo Removal
14. Penile Augmentation Surgery
15. Medical Skin Needling

The top fifteen most popular clinic searches by product during 2012 were as follows:

1. Botox®
2. Juvéderm® ULTRA
3. Restylane® (Perlane, Lipp, SubQ & Touch)
4. Dysport®
5. VASER® Lipo
6. Restylane® Vital
7. Genuine Dermaroller™
8. Radiesse™
9. Sculptra®
10. Juvéderm® VOLUMA
11. Azzalure®
12. Obagi Blue Peel
13. VelaSmooth™ & VelaShape™
14. Teosyal®
15. Belotero®

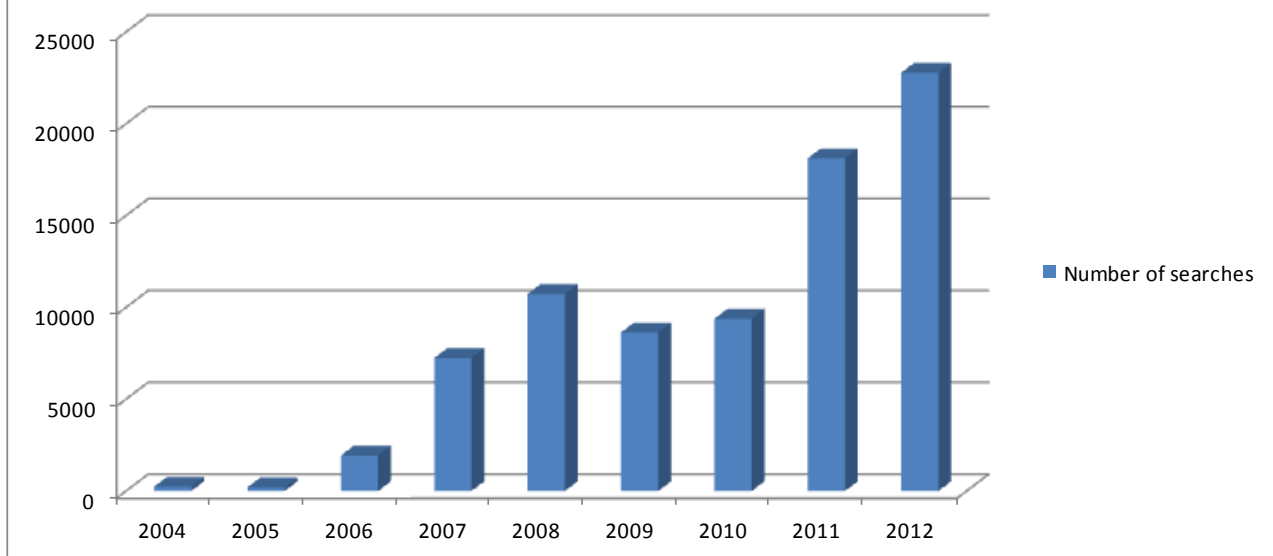
For those of you offering the traditional range of non-surgical medical aesthetic treatments such as facial injectables and laser/light treatments, this is great news and truly highlights that the public is indeed seeking out providers for these treatments and products, and is doing so via The Consulting Room™.

During 2012, over 22,500 visitors searched our directory specifically for a provider of Botox® for example, along with over 11,500 for Juvéderm ULTRA and just under 11,500 for Restylane®. Similarly over 22,000 looked for a clinic providing laser or IPL hair removal, while over 15,000 were looking for a microdermabrasion clinic.

This again shows the level of potential client referrals which our site is able to generate. As we approach our tenth birthday, we thought it might be fun to see just how the search data for clinic providers has changed over the years as facial aesthetics has become more widely available, socially accepted and embraced by the public.

The following chart shows the growth in searches through The Consulting Room™ for clinics providing the most well known brand of botulinum toxin, leading it to become the 'Hoover' of the toxin world in the eyes of the public, Botox®. This chart clearly shows how searching for treatment providers has expanded both in general and through The Consulting Room™ as our online presence has grown too.

## 9 Year Graph Showing Number of Clinic Searches for Botox® Providers via The Consulting Room



Another useful measure within our clinic search data is to take a look at regional breakdowns. In the past we have used Yellow Pages™ defined areas, counties (this will be returning shortly) and more recently right down to town and city level to enable site visitors to really hone in on their local area when searching for a clinic or practitioner.

Although, the results will be somewhat predictable, based on proliferations of clinics and people in and around the larger cities in the UK & Ireland, it is still a useful indicator of regional trends for interest in the services which our members provide.

The top fifteen most searched for towns or cities as locations for clinics in 2012 were as follows:

1. London
2. Birmingham
3. Manchester
4. Aberdeen
5. Glasgow
6. Liverpool
7. Bath
8. Altrincham
9. Aldershot
10. Leeds
11. Edinburgh
12. Bristol
13. Cardiff
14. Wilmslow
15. Belfast

All our top level statistics (site visitors and site searches) show that there are a significant number of people visiting The Consulting Room™ seriously looking for information with an intention to actually visit a clinic for treatment and it is all the reason you should need to make your profile stand out from your competition! If you haven't recently reviewed your clinic profile listing, may we recommend it as an urgent note on your 2013 'to do list'; as we predict that we will continue to grow our traffic numbers further during the next year, as optimisation of the website is an ongoing project.

Overall, we believe that these figures reinforce our position as the UK's No.1 specialist aesthetic information website - even though there are now many more information and clinic directory websites competing for traffic than there were when we started the site almost a decade ago, such as myfacemybody.com, goodsurgeonguide.com, and whatclinic.com, as well as more recently launched websites for cliniccompare.co.uk, treatmentsaver.com and treatmentadviser.com. We offer the consumer and our members much more quality content than any of our competitors which can only be a benefit for all parties.

Further in-depth data highlights the way in which The Consulting Room™ can generate client referrals for clinics through a number of mechanisms. Over 557,000 clinic profiles were viewed on the site during 2012; that works out at an average of just under 150 views per Consulting Room Member.

During the upgrade in the autumn of 2012, we implemented a new mechanism to track the number of telephone referrals generated for our Members. Visitors to a clinic profile must click on a button to display the telephone number for a clinic. Since going live this has generated an average traffic result of just under 700 clicks a month across our membership, making an average of 2 calls per clinic per month (regional variations will apply).

Alongside this a new general 'Contact Clinic' button was also rolled out. On clicking this within the profile pages of each member, the visitor is taken to a page featuring links to all the various direct contact methods for communicating with a clinic, including your own website, social media links (Twitter, Facebook and Blog), along with email and telephone. Since launch at the end of last year we have tracked that an average of over 10,000 clicks are being made per month to directly get in touch with a clinic for referral, averaging over 30 per clinic.

Finally during the whole of 2012, over 3,500 direct emails were sent to clinics from interested members of the public looking for treatment, making an average of 300 per month, and 11 emails a year per clinic generated by us (regional variations will apply).

We have always maintained that you really only require a single, paying client for facial injectables per year to cover the cost of subscribing to The Consulting Room™. With data showing the potential averages for both email and telephone contacts (and not taking into account those who contact you via your own website or social media pages) we hope you can see the true return on investment that your clinic listing with The Consulting Room™ is generating for you. Why not take a look at the statistics for your own website too and see how much direct traffic is being referred through your Consulting Room profile page.

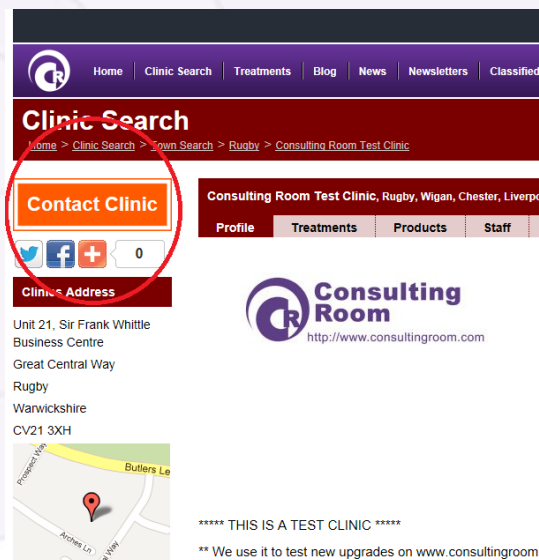
Additionally, for more bespoke statistics you can log into our Member's Area and see the statistics which apply directly to your clinic profile alone. Just go to the 'Clinic Update' section once logged in and a menu of statistics is available on the left hand side.

## Conclusion

We are continuing to develop the website as we achieve our 10th year online during 2013, whilst also working with the press and our ongoing social media profile to continually increase the number and quality of the traffic visiting our site.

2013 brings yet more challenges which include the results and inevitable fall-out from the Keogh report into the cosmetic industry, due in March. With a likely shake up in the way clinics advertise, particularly in relation to offers and deals, the format and professional nature of The Consulting Room™ website will provide a platform for those clinics who value their patients, their reputation, and best practice.

We hope you will stick with us on this journey as we continue to strive to maintain our status as the UK's largest, and dare we say most comprehensive aesthetic information website well into the next decade!



### Lorna Jackson

Lorna has been Editor of The Consulting Room™, the UK's largest aesthetic information website, for over nine years. She has become an industry commentator on a number of different areas related to the aesthetic industry, collating and evaluating statistics and writing feature articles, blogs, newsletters and reports for The Consulting Room™ and various consumer and trade publications, including *Aesthetic Medicine*, *Cosmetic News* and *Aesthetic Dentistry Today*.