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CONSULTING ROOM

Your Aesthetic Partner

FEATURE ARTICLE

Consulting Room 2015 Website Traffic Statistics

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Consulting Room™ 2015 Website Traffic Statistics

So, here we are again, another year has gone by, and despite continued economic struggles, a new political party in charge of the UK government and televisions full of coverage of 'botched' procedures, the aesthetic sector seems to be pretty healthy, with many clinics firmly in profit.

Gauging market growth is a pretty tricky task as we have no centralised body tracking data for the UK aesthetic and cosmetic sector, in terms of actual practicing clinics and procedure/treatment numbers being performed. Annual data audited by the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (BAAPS) and the largest cosmetic surgery chains such as the Hospital Group, MYA and Transform continues to show growth in enquiries and procedure numbers.

However, this generally only reflects on the surgical marketplace and means that analysis of the non-surgical marketplace is most definitely lacking, leading to best guesstimates from various sources, such as pharmaceutical suppliers, trade associations and extrapolations from publicly surveyed data.

Television shows, media coverage and social media trends also point to increased consumer interest and demand for cosmetic enhancement. This has shown a change in demographics in recent years too. Once more the realm and interest of the baby boomers (who also had the available disposable income), we are now seeing a move to a much younger demographic interested in 'preventative' treatments and enhancements such as lip augmentation.

This trend became abundantly apparent earlier in 2015 when speculation over the youngest of the reality TV's Kardashian clan, Kylie Jenner's lips and their sudden enlargement hit social media. Ultimately, the then 17-year old admitted it was due to dermal filler injections, but that was some time after her new pout had sparked a dangerous viral trend which saw teens sucking into shot glasses to cause swelling and inflammation of their lips to create a pouted look – often with disastrous results. After her disclosure however, UK clinics reported their phones ringing off the hook with 18 to 25 year olds clamouring for lip augmentations.

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 1st to December 31st 2015 over 1 million unique visitors came to **www.consultingroom.com**. This is an increase on our 2014 data and in fact is our highest traffic figures since a peak in 2010, reflecting the continued recovery of the sector post things like the PIP scandal and the economic downturn. This figure continues to show the consist levels of web traffic being received by the site as we enter our thirteenth year online.

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

I think we can safely say that our visitor data demonstrates some minor ups and downs over recent years, but it has still remained relatively stable, with an average over the last 5 years above 900,000 visitors.

Some of the small instability in the numbers actively researching treatments, which has lead to fluctuations in traffic numbers during 2010 through to 2015, could be attributed to all sorts of reasons, including economic concerns, industry scandals and poor press, increases in resources available for research including television shows and locally based marketing by clinics. Interest seems to have bounced back so I think we can be somewhat confident in a healthy business sector.

For the last three years of so, as an industry, and certainly since the PIP scandal, we have had to put up with the constant media coverage of 'botched' or 'surgery gone wrong' and 'fix-it' programming which have, and continue to plague the cosmetic industry and no doubt affect consumer confidence in both the medical professionals and regulators. The myriad of celebrity 'disasters' appearing daily on social media and gossip columns adds to the mix, although this is somewhat countered by the many celebrity endorsements and reality television stars who continue to extol the virtues of 'having something done'.

Television programmes such as Botched up Bodies, which is now embarking on a sixth series (who knew!) depict 'repair' jobs on those individuals for whom an inexperienced practitioner or a trip abroad caused life changing complications. This could no doubt have put a sour note into the minds of some previously considering cosmetic treatments and procedures. It will be interesting to see how long it takes for the media to return to the days of positive programming, with a little less beauty pageant emphasis we hope!

With our own focus on improved regulation, with much to come in 2016 – implementation of the HEE recommendations for training and qualifications for non-surgical cosmetic intervention providers, the RCS launching accreditation for plastic surgeons involved in aesthetic procedures, Scotland planning to regulate non-surgical clinics and the CEN standard for non-surgical aesthetic treatments – the opportunity for improvements in the sector which will expose where 'botched' outcomes happen, and can thus be cleaned-up, can only be a good thing and continue to raise consumer confidence.

Generally speaking, the industry appears healthy and our 2015 statistics are heading upwards again so it's looking good for all, even with all those considerations.

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 2015 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

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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.

We experienced just over 820,000 page views for our various Treatment and Product FAQ information pages during 2015. This is in fact a drop on our 2014 page viewing figures of over 1.3 million, which had itself been a doubling of 2013 data (which saw just over 650,000 page views). If we take this anomaly out of the picture, then we can at least be certain that traffic to this section of the site is up on 2013 and continues to show that consumers are still researching and looking for quality information on the treatments and procedures available to them

We compared the results with last year's figures in order to note any changes in line with observed trends. Most of the top ten was unchanged, with either non-movers or small one place movers. Interestingly Radiofrequency for Facial Rejuvenation seems to continue to be the most popular treatment to research, highlighting the move away from invasive, surgical facelifts towards minimally invasive tissue tightening options and the modalities able to achieve this, which have been covered widely in the media. As a more complex concept, the use of RF energy and associated heat to produce changes in the dermal structures, it is no surprise to see people wanting to learn more about exactly what it involves and this is exactly why we have such detailed content on treatments and procedures.

Many more traditional treatments such as Microdermabrasion,, Fractional Laser Skin Resurfacing and Laser & IPL Skin Rejuvenation dropped out of the top 20 areas being researched – this is perhaps a sign that such concepts are so mainstream now and awareness is high that people simply don't feel the need to research them (before seeking a provider) and instead are drawn to reading about other treatment options that they may not have heard of to learn just what their options may be for addressing their cosmetic concern.

New entrants to the charts, although not new treatments this year, do help to demonstrate the popularity and public awareness of them and what is peaking interest amongst consumers. With the increased press coverage during 2015 for PRP and thread lifts, such as Silhouette Soft, we are not surprised to see more traffic to these areas of the website for example.

The top twenty most popular Treatment/Procedure FAQs to research in 2015 were as follows:

1. Radiofrequency for Facial Rejuvenation *(non-mover)*
2. Penile Augmentation Surgery *(non-mover)*
3. Laser & IPL Hair Removal *(non-mover)*
4. Vaginal Surgery (Labiaplasty) *(non-mover)*
5. Chemical Peels *(up 2 places)*
6. Specialist Skincare ***(new entrant)***
7. Dermal Fillers *(down 1 place)*
8. Micro-pigmentation (Cosmetic) *(up 8 places)*
9. Botulinum Toxin (up 2 places)
10. Thread Lift ***(new entrant)***
11. Laser Tattoo Removal *(down 4 places)*
12. Carboxytherapy *(up 2 places)*
13. Medical Skin Needling ***(New entrant)***
14. Non-Surgical Hair Replacement ***(New entrant)***
15. Radiofrequency for Cellulite & Fat *(down 6 places)*
16. Hydradermabrasion (Hydrafacial) ***(new entrant)***
17. Blepharoplasty ***(new entrant)***
18. Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) Therapy ***(new entrant)***
19. Umbilicoplasty (Belly Button Surgery) *(down 5 placec)*
20. Alevere (Alizonne) Therapy ***(new entrant)***

The top ten most popular Product FAQs to research in 2015 were as follows:

1. Teosyal *(non-mover)*
2. Restylane Vital *(up 1 place)*
3. Juvéderm Ultra *(up 6 places)*
4. Pixel *(down 3 places)*
5. Dermaceutic Peels *(down 1 place)*
6. Revanesse and Redexis *(up 2 places)*
7. Perfectha ***(new entrant)***
8. Cryolipolysis (CoolSculpting) *(up 1 place)*
9. Botox ***(new entrant)***
10. Accent RF *(down 4 places)*

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 up by 34% on 2014 figures.

With our **Clinic Search** directory allowing visitors to find clinics by a variety of methods, including clinic and practitioner names, products, treatments, towns, which treatment areas and counties; 2015 saw a total of just over 3.75 million searches for clinics and practitioners in the UK & Ireland using these various parameters. This continues the growth in searches seen over the last 5 years with figures of approximately 500,000 in 2011, over 1.13 million in 2012, 2.6 million in 2013 and 2.8 million in 2014.

This means that the number of clinic searches performed on The Consulting Room™ has continued to maintain a steady and significant growth and in fact had another dramatic rise in the last twelve months. You should no doubt have seen this reflected in the number of referrals generated by us for your business as our clinic search pages have improved and 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 it places on the information that it finds on an individual site, we are continuing to upgrade The Consulting Room – look out for our relaunch in March 2016 - to adapt to the newer optimisation requirements, the growing need for responsive or mobile-technology friendly websites and to create a faster and better search engine optimised service for those looking for (and finding) providers of aesthetic treatments and products.

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 2015 were as follows:

1. Dermal Fillers *(non-mover)*
2. Laser and IPL Hair Removal (up 1 place)
3. Botulinum Toxin *(down 1 place)*
4. Chemical Peels *(non-mover)*
5. Microdermabrasion *(non-mover)*
6. Laser and IPL Skin Rejuvenation *(up 1 place)*
7. Laser / IPL Treatment Pigmented/Vascular Problems *(down 1 place)*
8. Laser Tattoo Removal *(non-mover)*
9. Specialist Skin Creams *(non-mover)*
10. Sclerotherapy and Microsclerotherapy *(non-mover)*
11. Micropigmentation (Semi Permanent Make-Up) *(up 1 place)*
12. Medical Skin Needling *(down 1 place)*
13. Cellulite Treatment (Mechanical Massage) *(up 2 places)*
14. Mesotherapy *(down 1 place)*
15. Radiofrequency For Facial Rejuvenation *(down 1 place)*

The top fifteen most popular searches by treatment or procedure was the same as in 2013 and 2014 with no new entrants or drop-outs, however there were some changes in the positions of some searches. Dermal fillers took the top spot again having pushed Laser Hair Removal down in 2014, highlighting a renewed dominance for searches for cosmetic injectable treatments, although botulinum toxins were pushed to second in 2014 and third in 2015. With high profile, celebrity lead campaigns by Restylane® and Juvéderm® during 2015, it's no surprise that dermal fillers, as a natural anti-ageing treatment, are now heavily sought after by the public. Add to that the Kylie Jenner factor, as previously mentioned, and it's clear to see why this treatment remains at the top spot. Over 50,000 visitors looked for a dermal filler provider in 2014, which was a rise of 12.5% on 2013 figures – 2015 figures show over 71,000 searches – a 41.5% increase on last year!

Yet again, surgical procedures are absent from the top fifteen most popular clinic searches by treatment, when compared to previous years, highlighting a continued move away from more invasive, surgical treatment options.

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The top fifteen most popular clinic searches by product during 2015 were as follows:

1. Botox ® *(non-mover)*
2. Juvéderm ® ULTRA *(non-mover)*
3. Restylane ® (Perlane, Lip Volume & SubQ) *(non-mover)*
4. Juvéderm ® VOLUMA *(up 1 place)*
5. Sculptra ® *(up 2 places)*
6. Restylane ® Skinboosters (Vital & Lip Refresh) *(down 2 places)*
7. Radiesse ™ *(up 1 place)*
8. Genuine Dermaroller™ *(down 2 places)*
9. Azzalure ® *(non-mover)*
10. Dysport ® *(up 2 places)*
11. Teosyal ® *(down 1 place)*
12. Obagi Blue Peel *(down 1 place)*
13. Vistabel ® *(non-mover)*
14. Belotero ® *(non-mover)*
15. Bocouture ® *(non-mover)*

As with the treatment search, the top fifteen most popular clinic searches by product in 2015, when compared to 2013 and 2014, was essentially the same with the top three the same as last year.

For those of you offering the traditional range of non-surgical medical aesthetic treatments such as cosmetic injectables, these results truly highlight that the public is indeed not only seeking out providers for these treatments but is becoming more aware of the leading product brand names, and is doing so via The Consulting Room™. This is particularly apparent with the rise up the rankings of other botulinum toxin type A brands (marketed for cosmetic indications), with Azzalure® and Bocouture® which rose up the ranks last year, still maintaining their spots. This highlights that consumer awareness of other brands, aside from Botox®, is growing, despite it still holding the top spot. Figures for those seeking out injectables continues to rise. During 2014, just over 162,000 visitors searched our directory specifically for a provider of Botox® for example, which was a 92% rise on 2013. During 2015, just over 252,000 searches were performed, a rise again of 55%. During 2015 there were also over 47,00 searches for Juvéderm ULTRA providers (up 29% on 2014) and just over 42,000 for Restylane® (up 18% on 2014).

All of this shows the level of potential client referrals which our site is able to generate for you and why it's important to review and optimise your listing at regular intervals.

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, postcodes and counties (which returned to our searches in 2013), as well as town and city level searches to enable site visitors to really hone in on their local area when searching for a clinic or practitioner near them. As well as your geographical address, you have the option to target three towns/cities in a radius of your clinic so that you will appear in search results for those locations.

Although, the results can be somewhat predictable, based on traditional proliferations of clinics and people in and around the larger cities in the UK & Ireland, such as London, Birmingham and Manchester, it is still a useful indicator of regional trends for interest in the services which our members provide as this year again sees many smaller towns appearing in the top fifteen. Visitors are clearly looking in more regional locations where clinics are now more widely available to the public nowadays.

The top fifteen most searched for towns or cities as locations for clinics in 2015 were as follows:

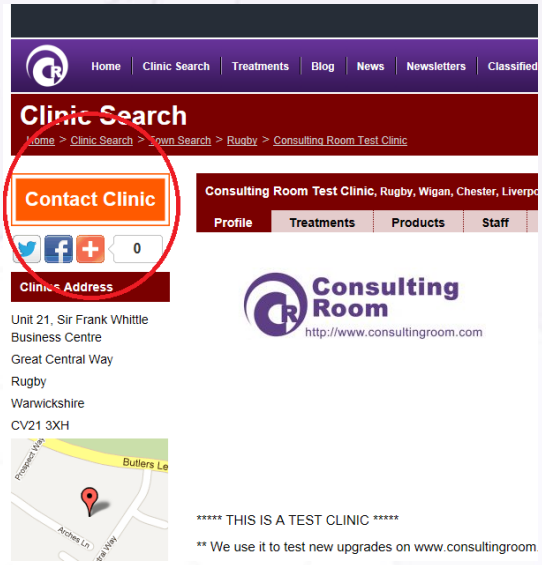
1. London *(non-mover)*
2. Manchester *(non-mover)*
3. Leeds *(up 1 place)*
4. Birmingham *(down 1 place)*
5. Glasgow *(non-mover)*
6. Altrincham ***(new entrant)***
7. Liverpool (up 1 place)
8. Sheffield *(down 2 places)*
9. Aberdeen *(down 2 places)*
10. Belfast *(up 2 places)*
11. St Albans *(up 2 places)*
12. Cardiff ***(new entrant)***
13. Nottingham *(down 2 places)*
14. Oxford ***(new entrant)***
15. Chester ***(new entrant)***

Anyone wishing to see statistics for their town and how it ranks nationally can email **lorna@consultingroom.com** for information.

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, or the treatments that you are listed as providing, may we recommend it as an urgent note on your 2016 '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 and our relaunch is coming soon (more details in a moment).

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 over a decade ago. 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. 346,800 clinic profiles were viewed on the site during 2015; that works out at an average of 543 views per Consulting Room Member.



We are able 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. During 2015 this generated an average traffic result of just under 1,498 clicks a month across our membership, making an average of 2.3 calls per clinic per month (regional variations will apply).

Each clinic profile also has a general 'Contact Clinic' button. 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 the telephone number, your own website, social media links (Twitter, Facebook and Blog), along with an email form. During 2015 we tracked that an average of 20,000 clicks are being made per month to directly get in touch with a clinic for referral, averaging 31 per clinic (regional variations will apply).

Finally during the whole of 2015, 9,572 direct emails were sent to clinics from interested members of the public looking for treatment, (up 53% on 2014), making an average of 798 per month, and 15 emails a year per clinic generated by us (regional variations will apply). This is an increase of two additional email per year per clinic compared to 2014.

We have always maintained that you really only require a single, paying client 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 always continuing to develop the website and look at ways that we can continue to optimise our traffic and increase search engine result performance, as well as improve visitor interaction and engagement with the website. We do however wish to remind members that client referrals is of course only a small part of the benefits of overall membership to The Consulting Room™, we offer a broad packages of additional advantages from discounts, deals and free advertising to business advice.

Alongside this we continue to work with the press and increase our social media profile, both industry and consumer facing to augment the number and quality of the traffic visiting our site. To this end we now have over

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8,300 followers on Twitter, over 1,300 on Facebook and our Editor has recently had editorial featured in a national newspaper (The Independent on Sunday) where the website address was featured.

During 2015 we launched the Business Hub within our Members Area; this focuses on business topics, with documents, videos and audio content looking at many aspects of successfully running a medical aesthetic clinic business. We also embarked on the start of our new 'grand plan' in relation to our branding – this involved separating out our industry focused services from our consumer side with the launch of *The Cosmetic Guru* branding for our public facing content.

Since then our web design department have been beavering away on upgrades and improvements to the site ready for a relaunch in March 2016. Our new and updated mobile responsive site (great for smart phones and tablets) will be going live for all Consulting Room members on 12th March at the **SMART Ideas** event in London.

As well as a whole new look, this will include upgrades to the clinic search results display pages and your own individual clinic profile display pages; adding more ways to search for practitioners, and improvements to how your clinic profile looks. You will be able to include a full page-width banner image of your clinic, a checklist of additional facilities and services available at your clinic, a dedicated video page allowing you to host unlimited videos, a dedicated area to create image galleries with unlimited images, plus directions to your clinic with a full sized map.

Alongside this, and the biggest new change to the site is that we will be launching the Consulting Room Community area, a consumer based social network designed to get those interested in, or who have undertaken surgical or non-surgical treatments to share their experiences, photos and opinions with likeminded people, and most importantly to put them in touch with quality clinics in their area.

All of these improvements have been implemented and designed with the idea of increasing referrals for our customers. Responsive design and increased unique content all increase our web rankings, and we've combined this with a streamlined user experience to direct these people straight through to you! When it comes to your web presence, content is King! That's why our redesign allows you to contribute more and provide more content. The more content you provide, the more avenues you have for customers to find you with your videos, pictures and reviews all being linkable to our Blog, Treatment FAQs and Product FAQs.

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 and beyond! If you have any questions about your subscription with us, wish to have advice on optimising your clinic profile or learn how you can take advantage of many of the other membership benefits that are open to you, please have a read of our **Membership Guide**. Should you need further assistance, please feel free to contact The Consulting Room (**admin@consultingroom.com**).

Lorna Jackson

Lorna has been Editor of The Consulting Room™, the UK's largest aesthetic information website, for over a decade, since 2003. She has become an industry commentator on a number of different areas related to the aesthetic industry, collating and evaluating statistics, plus researching, investigating and writing feature articles, blogs, newsletters and reports for The Consulting Room™ and various consumer and trade publications, including *Cosmetic News, Journal of Aesthetic Nursing, Body Language*, *PMFA News*, *Aesthetic Medicine* and *Aesthetic Dentistry Today.* Lorna has also been asked to present at various industry events, including Smart Ideas, BACN and Merz Aesthetics Business Workshops, the FACE Conference and the Clinical, Cosmetic & Reconstructive Expo.

Lorna was recently awarded *Journalist of the Year* at the MyFaceMyBody Awards 2014.