



body



Appearance psychology

The recent announcement that the Government is subsidising treatments with facial re-contouring product Sculptra (poly-L-lactic acid) for severe lipoatrophy in HIV patients is a major breakthrough that recognises the psychology of appearance.

One in eight Australians using highly active life-saving antiretroviral medication (HAART) will develop severe facial lipoatrophy — a visibly dramatic, distinctive loss of fat in the face resulting in sunken cheeks.

I've treated hundreds of men and women suffering from this condition and witnessed firsthand the positive effects of gradually restoring facial volume with fillers such as Sculptra.

A survey of men living with HIV revealed that 55 percent of those with facial lipoatrophy believed people could tell their HIV status just by looking at them, and this became a major source of depression.

Restoring volume to the face removes this stigma and helps people maintain a healthy focus in their day-to-day lives.

Sometimes a picture tells a thousand words, so here I would like to introduce Phil Mace, a multimedia engineer who I treated in April.

"Lipoatrophy led to the gradual appearance of shadows in my face," Phil said. "I was drawn, tired and very sallow in appearance and my dimples had disappeared. The changes happened so slowly. It wasn't until after undergoing treatment for my lipoatrophy that I could look in the mirror and finally ask, 'Who is this person and where have the past 10 years gone?'"

"I now have a new lease on life. I feel really positive about myself again. I now walk out my door with confidence. My re-contoured face makes



guest
column

DR JOSEPH HKEIK



Phil Mace ... 'I feel really positive about myself again'.

a big difference to the way I interact with the world around me."

At All Saints Cosmedical, we offer bulk billing for HIV-related treatments for lipoatrophy with Sculptra.

Info: Dr Joseph Hkeik is a cosmetic physician with over ten years' experience. He completed his studies in HIV medicine in 2002 and is an S100 prescriber. Dr Hkeik has treated many patients with severe HIV-related facial lipoatrophy. He participated in the Sculptra Poly-lactic Therapy Program offered by the NSW government in 2007 to patients with severe HIV-related lipoatrophy.