



**Cosmetic Plastic Surgery**

**2006/2007**

**&**

**Health Tourism**

**in the Czech Republic**

1. Research Objective .....	3
2. Research Performance and Methodology .....	4
3. Plastic Surgery in the Czech Republic.....	5
3.1 Focus on Czech vs. foreign clients .....	5
3.2 Czech and foreign client ratio (in %).....	6
3.3 The most frequent countries of origin of foreign clients .....	7
3.4 Number of plastic surgeries performed in 2007.....	9
3.5 Client number annual comparison (2006/2007).....	9
3.6 Sex and age of clients .....	11
3.7 The most frequent procedures.....	12
3.7.1 Procedures in women .....	12
3.7.2 Procedures in men .....	13
3.8 Advance knowledge of clients .....	14
3.9 Post-operative care .....	15
3.10 Requests for re-operations performed by other surgeons .....	16
3.10.1 The most frequent causes of dissatisfaction and re-operation .....	17
3.11 Refusal of clients .....	18
4. Health Tourism in the Czech Republic.....	19
4.1 Foreign client recruitment methods .....	19
4.2 Organization of health stays for foreign clients.....	20
4.3 Forms and risks of health tourism.....	22
4.3.1 Consultation and examinations before a procedure .....	22
4.3.2 Post-operative care .....	25
Appendix no. 1 - Questionnaire.....	27

## 1. Research Objective

**The research goal was to gather current information on cosmetic plastic surgery and health tourism. Our aim was to ask questions and gather information that will be interesting and of use to surgeons and clinics as well as patients and the media.**

The performed survey can be divided into two areas according to theme – the situation in cosmetic plastic surgery in the Czech Republic and health tourism.

The research was aimed at gathering **basic data** in the field of cosmetic plastic surgery in the Czech Republic. We mainly examined:

- number of procedures performed in 2007
- the most frequent procedures
- sex and age of clients
- number of re-operations of procedures performed by other surgeons
- number of refused clients
- country of origin of clients

The research also wanted to have an annual comparison for 2006/2007 and trace the trends for following years.

**Health tourism** for cosmetic plastic surgery to the Czech Republic was another field that we wanted to map in general. Here, we mainly focused on:

- proportion of foreign clients
- foreign client recruitment methods
- organizational assistance with health stays
- frequency and risk of particular procedures within health tourism

## **2. Research Performance and Methodology**

The study was performed in the form of a questionnaire survey. Data was gathered in person or by telephone interviews from March to May 2008.

45 specialized plastic surgeons from different regions in the Czech Republic took part in the research study.

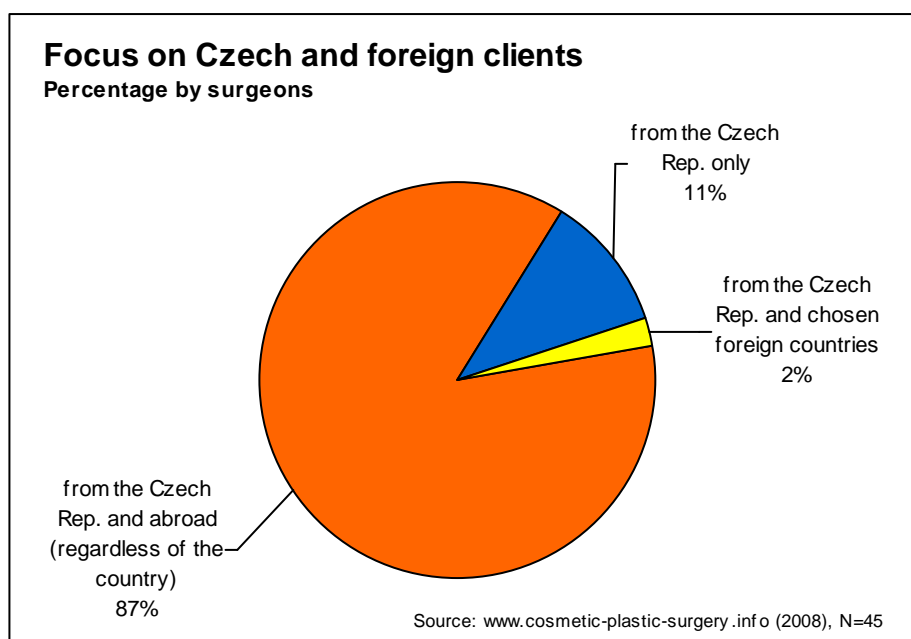
For each question the respondents were asked to make a qualified estimate, not to provide exact data.

The questionnaire is attached to the study.

### 3. Plastic Surgery in the Czech Republic

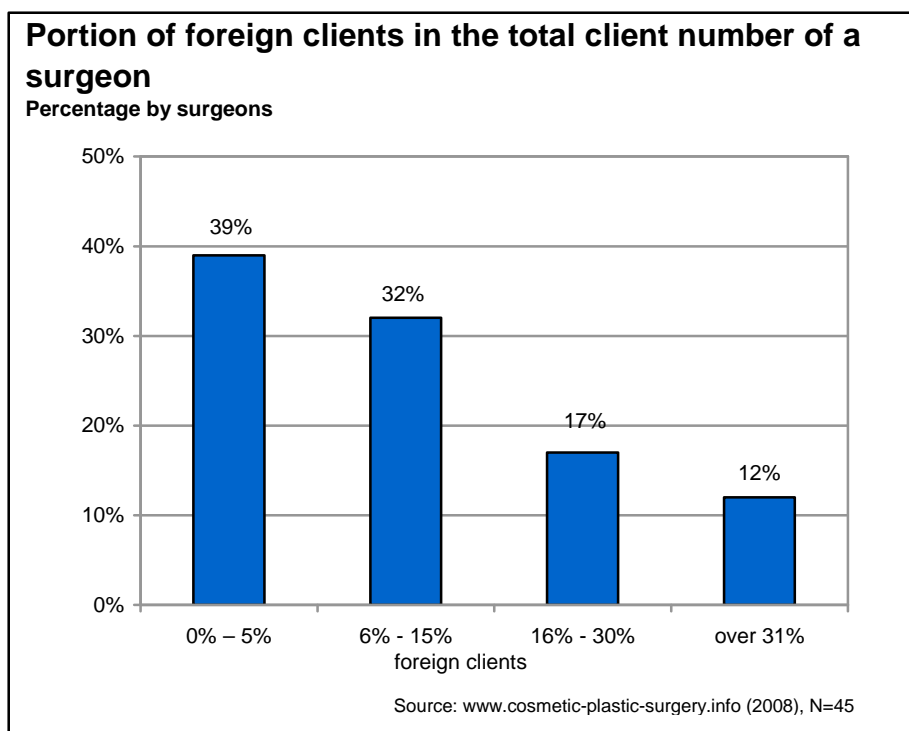
#### 3.1 Focus on Czech vs. foreign clients

- **87% of questioned plastic surgeons answered they focused on Czech as well as foreign clients, regardless the country of origin.**
- 11% of polled concentrate exclusively on Czech clients.
- only 2% of surgeons operate on Czech clients and foreign clients from selected countries; these are mainly neighboring states - Slovakia, Austria and Germany.



### 3.2 Czech and foreign client ratio (in %)

- Foreign clients make up 10% of the clients of an average surgeon (median)<sup>1</sup>. If we calculate the clients by the number of performed procedures, we find that the **procedures for foreign clients** made up an average of **19%** of all procedures in 2007. This is because **foreign clients visit the bigger surgeries or clinics**.
- The portion of foreign clients differs among surgeons. Foreign clients make up none or a very small portion (up to 5%) in 39% of surgeons. Whereas in 5% of the interviewed surgeons foreign clients make up more than half of their clients.
- As seen below, the portion of foreign clients decreased compared to 2006 (see chapter 3.4.1).



<sup>1</sup> Median is a mean value. If we make a succession of all values, median is the value in the middle. Unlike average it is not distorted by possible extreme values.

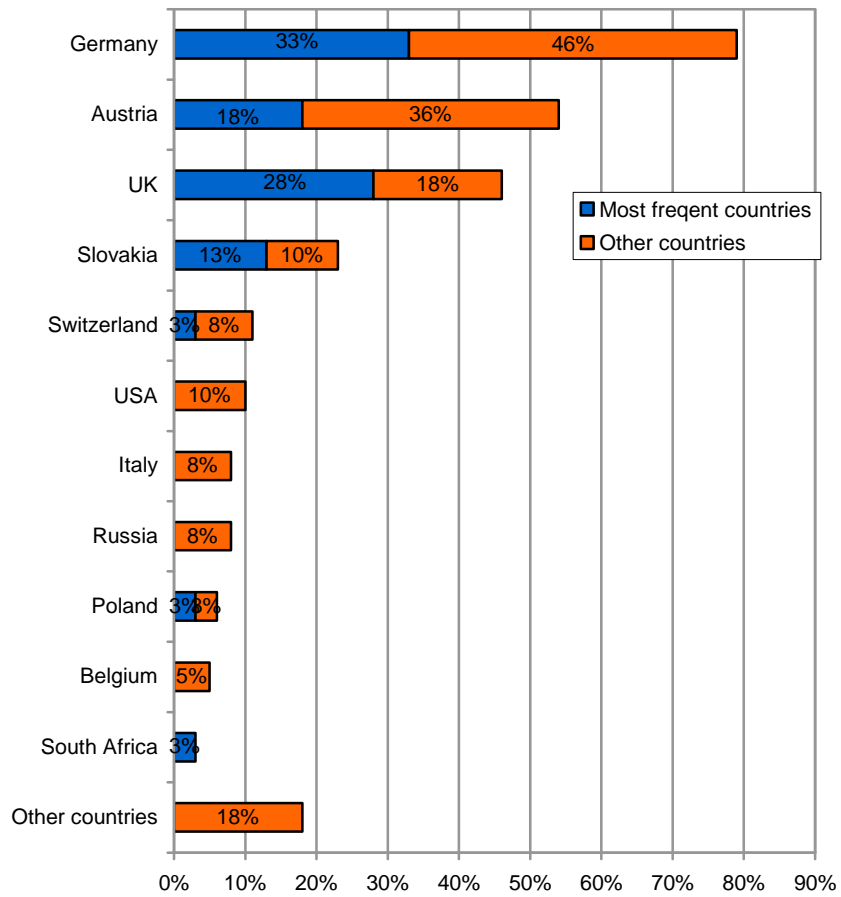
### 3.3 The most frequent countries of origin of foreign clients

We asked the surgeons performing procedures for foreign clients to state what countries the clients most often came from.

- **79%** of interviewed surgeons stated their clients came from **Germany**. 33% of surgeons put Germany in the first position.
- The second most often listed country of foreign clients' origin was **Austria (54%** of surgeons).
- **The United Kingdom** follows. **46%** of surgeons have clients from the United Kingdom and clients from the U.K. occur the most often for 28% of the surgeons.
- 23% of the surgeons mentioned Slovak clients.
- Clients from more distant countries such as the U. S. A., Russia, South Africa or Arabic states come to the Czech Republic as well. However, they are not so numerous.
- If we carry out a weighted estimate of the number of clients, the succession of countries does not change - most clients come from Germany, followed by Austria, the U.K. and Slovakia.



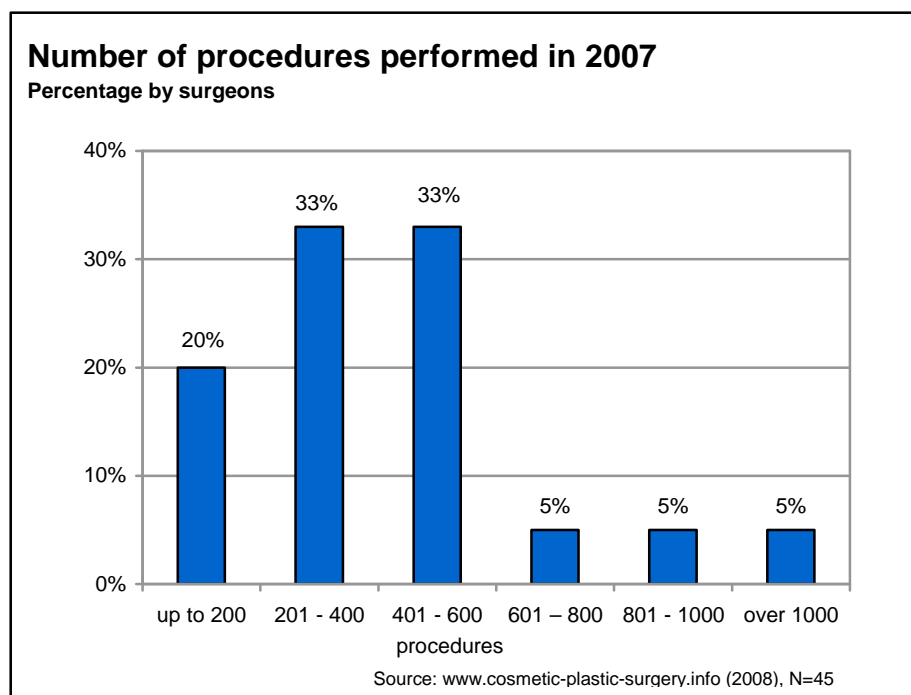
### The most frequent countries of origin of foreign clients Percentage by surgeons



Source: www.cosmetic-plastic-surgery.info (2008), N=45

### 3.4 Number of plastic surgeries performed in 2007

- The number of performed procedures significantly differs among surgeons. The smallest of the interviewed surgeons performed 30 procedures in 2007, the largest, 1300.
- The average surgeon (median)<sup>2</sup> performed **400 procedures** in 2007.



### 3.5 Client number annual comparison (2006/2007)

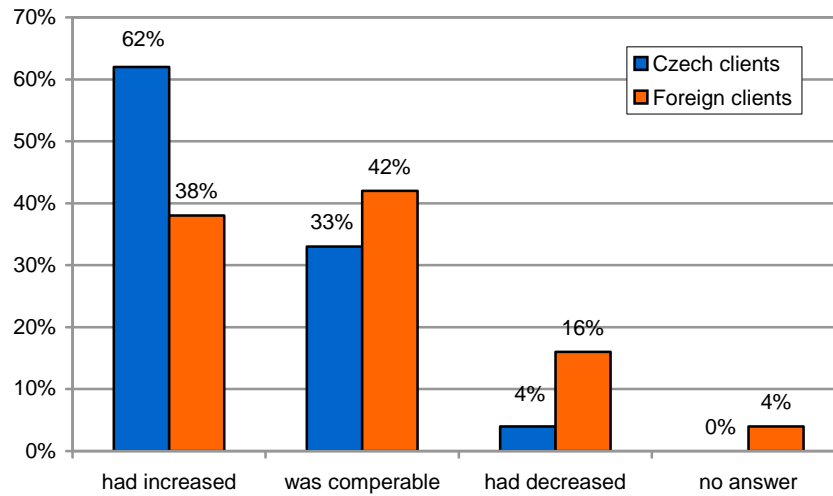
- In 2007 the interviewed plastic surgeons noticed an **increase in the number of clients**. The increasing number of Czech patients occurred more often than an increasing number of foreign clients.
- 62% of respondents stated that the number of Czech clients increased in 2007 comparing to 2006. 4% of interviewed surgeons stated a decrease in Czech clients.
- 38% of plastic surgeons stated an increase in foreign clients. 16% of surgeons noticed a decrease in foreign clients.

<sup>2</sup> Median is a mean value. If we make a succession of all values, median is the value in the middle. Unlike average it is not distorted by possible extreme values.



### Number of clients in 2007 compared to 2006

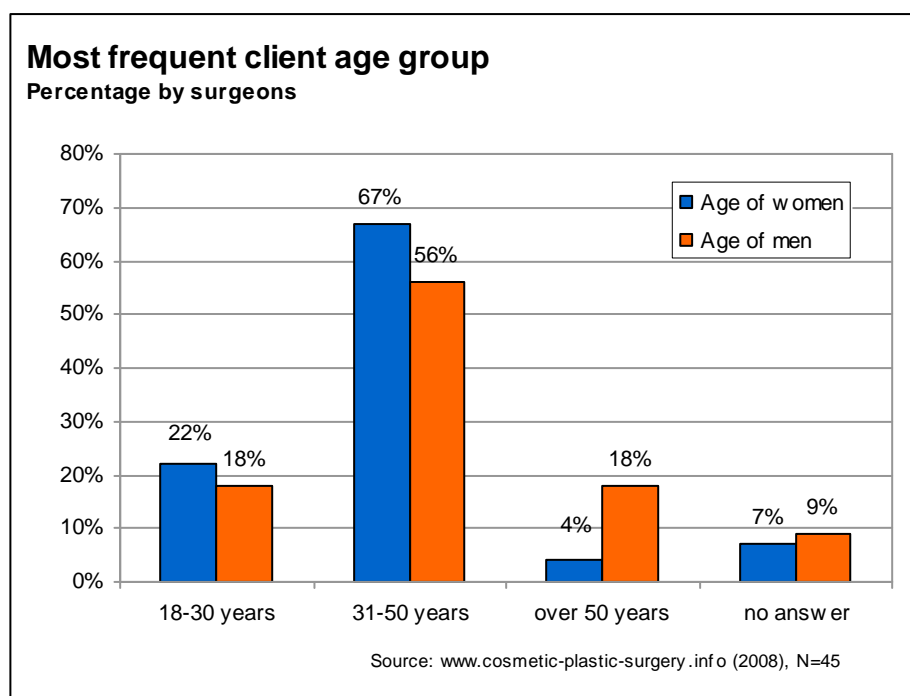
Percentage by surgeons



Source: www.cosmetic-plastic-surgery.info (2008), N=45

### 3.6 Sex and age of clients

- The clients of Czech cosmetic plastic surgeons are almost entirely **women** (**88%** on average, respectively 87% in foreign clients).
- None of the interviewed surgeons specialize only in women or men.
- 67% respondents stated their female clients are most often in the **age group of 31 – 50**; male clients also most often come from this age group (56% according to the answers).
- The second most frequent group consists of clients from 18 to 30 years of age; 22% women and 18% men according to respondents.
- Contrary to women, men over fifty also visit plastic surgeons.

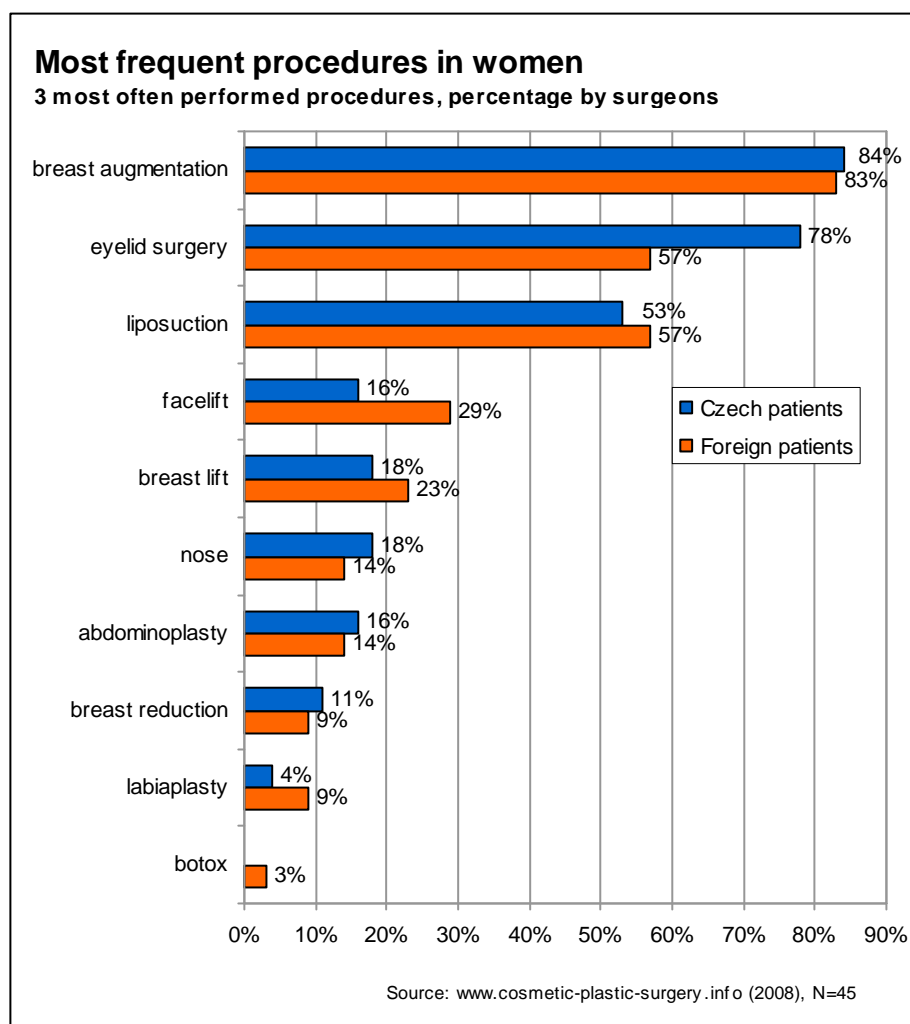


### 3.7 The most frequent procedures

We asked the respondents about the three procedures they had most often performed in 2007. We asked separately for procedures in males and females and in Czech and foreign clients.

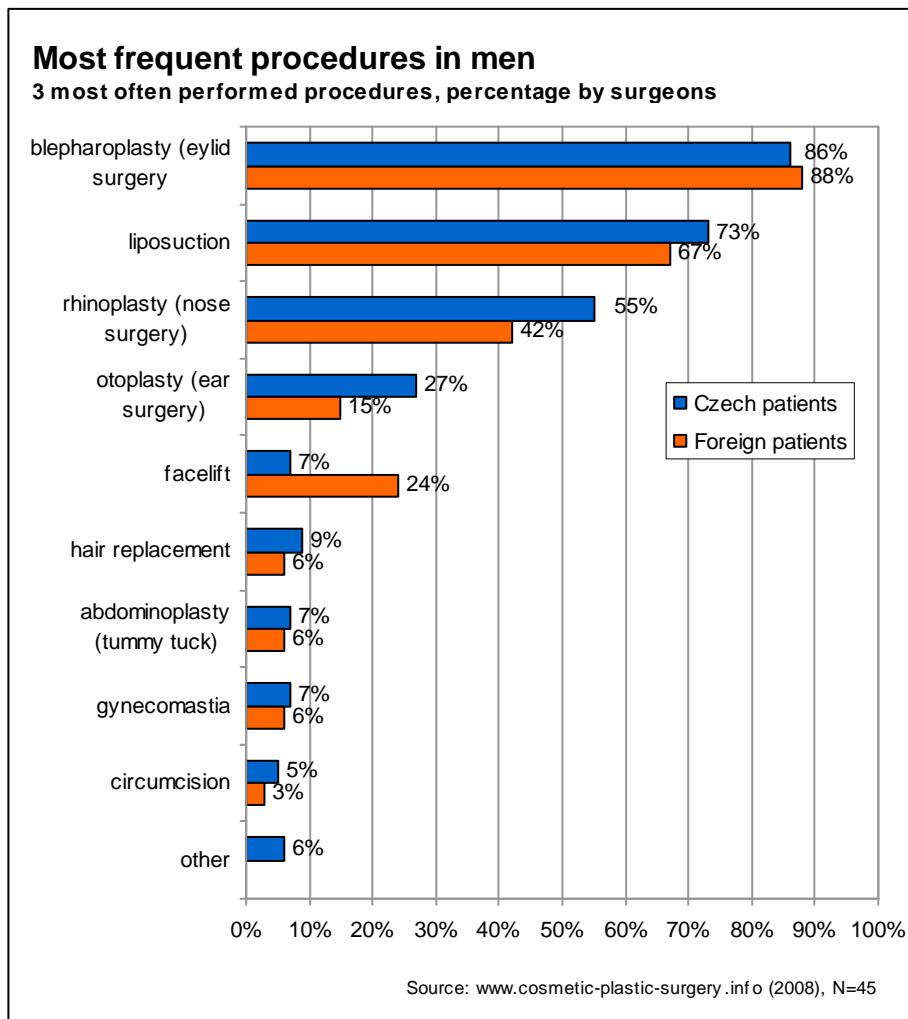
#### 3.7.1 Procedures in women

- The procedures performed most often in Czech women are **breast augmentation** (augmentation) and **eyelid surgery**. Approx. 80% of plastic surgeons perform these two procedures most often (eyelid surgery was put in the first position most often).
- With foreign women, augmentation is definitely the most often performed. 83% of interviewed surgeons put it among the three most often performed procedures. Eyelid surgery and liposuction (57%) follow.
- Foreign women have facelifts more often than Czech women.



### 3.7.2 Procedures in men

- 86% of respondents stated that the three procedures performed most often in Czech male clients include **eyelid surgery**. 73% of the polled mentioned **liposuction** and 55% stated **nose surgery**.
- The ranking of the most common procedures is the same in foreign male clients as with Czech male clients.
- Like foreign women, foreign male patients have facelifts more often than Czech men.



### 3.8 Advance knowledge of clients

We were interested in how the surgeons evaluate the advance knowledge of clients on the procedures they require and if the patients realize what risks and complications may occur in relation to a particular surgical procedure. The interviewed surgeons evaluated the advance knowledge of clients using 1 to 5 grades – 1= excellent advance knowledge and 5=insufficient advance knowledge.

#### Advance knowledge of clients

Advanced knowledge	Czech clients	Foreign clients
on the necessity of being informed in detail about the operation price and what it includes	2,1	1,6
generally on the procedure they are interested in	2,1	2,0
on the necessity of being informed about the expertise of the surgeon or clinic	3,2	2,5
on necessary post-operative care and restrictions during the recovery period which must be followed	3,1	2,7
on possible risks and complications related to the operation	3,2	2,7

*Note: Table features average grades given to clients by respondents.*

- Comparing Czech and foreign clients, it seems that **foreign patients are generally better informed than Czech clients**.
- According to surgeons the clients are **best informed** on the necessity of being informed in detail about the procedure price. Besides the price, the patients are generally informed on the procedure they require.
- However the patients, and Czech patients in particular, have **insufficient knowledge** of possible risks, post-operative care demands and a surgeon's expertise.

### 3.9 Post-operative care

In relation to a patients' knowledge of procedure risks and the necessity of post-operative care, we were interested to learn to what extent the patients follow the recommendations for post-operative care. We assume that insufficient advance knowledge about the importance of post-operative care results in underestimating and neglecting such care.

Surgeons evaluated their clients' follow through on aftercare using 1 to 5 grades - 1=excellent – 5=insufficient follow through.

#### Clients' follow through

Czech clients - female	1,8	foreign clients - female	2,2
Czech clients – male	2,0	foreign clients - male	2,3

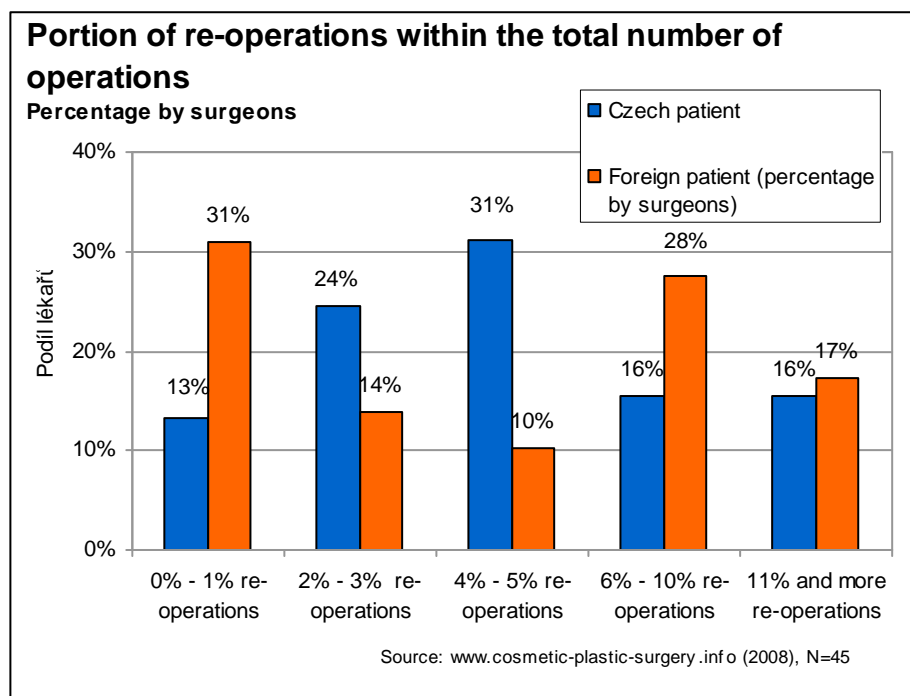
*Note: Table features average grades given to clients by respondents.*

- Generally the recommended post-operative care is more responsibly observed by Czech female and male patients than by foreign patients. It may be related generally to the phenomena of health tourism which represents a higher level of risk and the people who decide to do it are less responsible towards their health.
- Compared to men, **women** are more **disciplined**.
- The assumption that a lower level of initial advance knowledge leads to lesser responsibility has not been confirmed. The observation of recommended post-operative care generally depends on the more risky lifestyle of men and respectively on the decision to undertake the procedure abroad.

### 3.10 Requests for re-operations performed by other surgeons

The work of practicing surgeons also includes re-operations, i. e. repairs of not entirely successful first or subsequent operations. We are interested in how frequent the re-operations are and to what they relate.

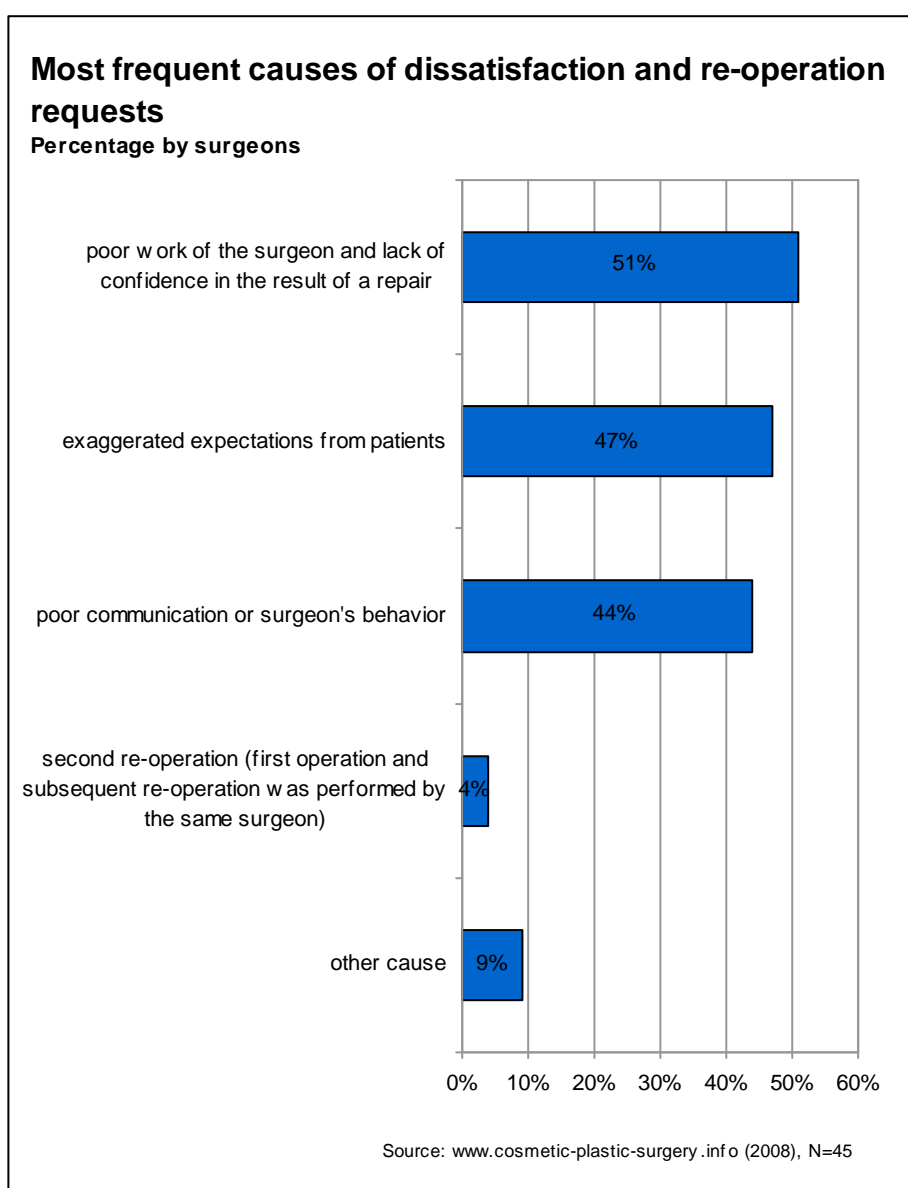
- Approximately **5% of Czech patients require re-operations of procedures performed by other plastic surgeons**<sup>3</sup>. The median proportion of re-operations within the total number of operations of an average surgeon is the same.
- The median proportion of re-operations is the same with foreign clients as with Czech clients. However we do not know if the repaired procedures were performed by Czech or foreign surgeons.



<sup>3</sup> Weighted by the number of clients and if we assume that surgeons in the Czech Republic cover most of Czech patients.

### 3.10.1 The most frequent causes of dissatisfaction and re-operation

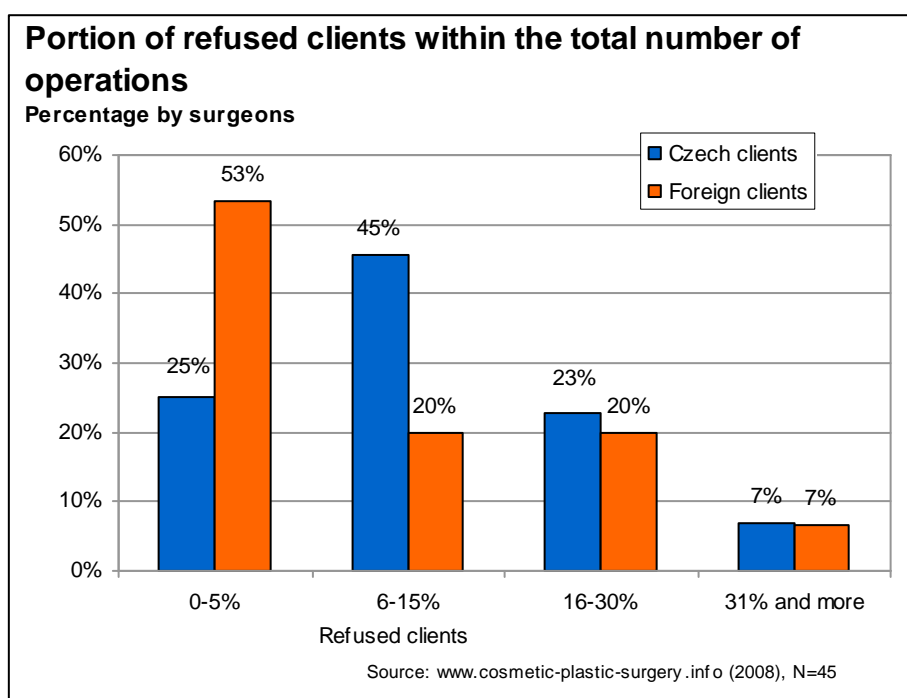
- The most frequent causes of requests for re-operation of procedures performed at other clinics is a **combination of poor work of the previous surgeon, poor communication and exaggerated expectations from patients**. It cannot be determined which cause is the most frequent.
- Surgeons performing more re-operations lean towards the opinion that the cause of dissatisfaction is poor work performed by the surgeon. On the contrary surgeons who encounter re-operation requests less often, mention more frequently that exaggerated expectations from the patient or poor communication with the surgeon are the causes of the re-operation.



### 3.11 Refusal of clients

How often do plastic surgeons refuse to perform procedures for patients? Is this proportion different with foreign and Czech clients?

- An average plastic surgeon (median) refuses 10% of possible Czech clients and 5% of foreign clients. If we calculate the figure into the number of performed procedures, **16% of Czech clients and 11% of foreign clients are refused.**
- Large clinics refuse clients more often than clinics with a small number of procedures.



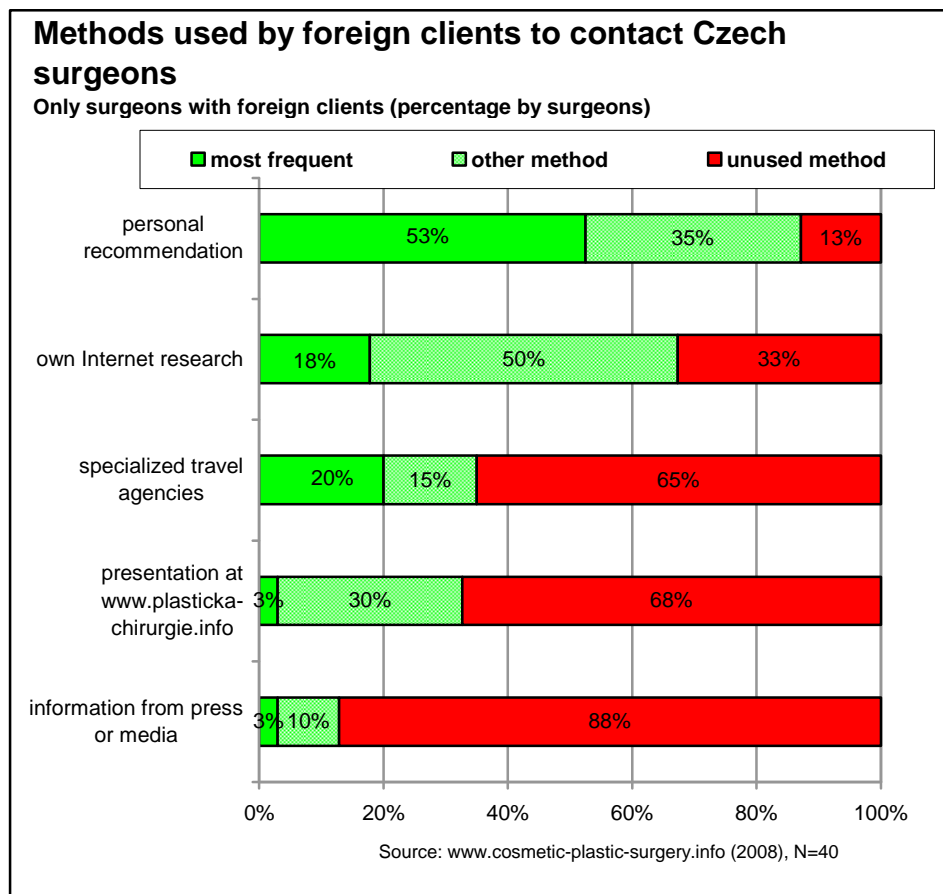
## 4 Health Tourism in the Czech Republic

### 4.1 Foreign client recruitment methods

We were interested in methods plastic surgeons use to recruit foreign clients. We asked what contact methods were used by foreign clients in 2007.

- Most often the surgeons are contacted on the basis of **personal recommendations**. 53% of interviewed surgeons put this method in the first position and 35% put it in other positions.
- The second method most often used in searching for foreign surgeons is their **own Internet survey**. 68% of surgeons are contacted upon their web presentations. It is the most frequent source of foreign clients for 18% of surgeons.

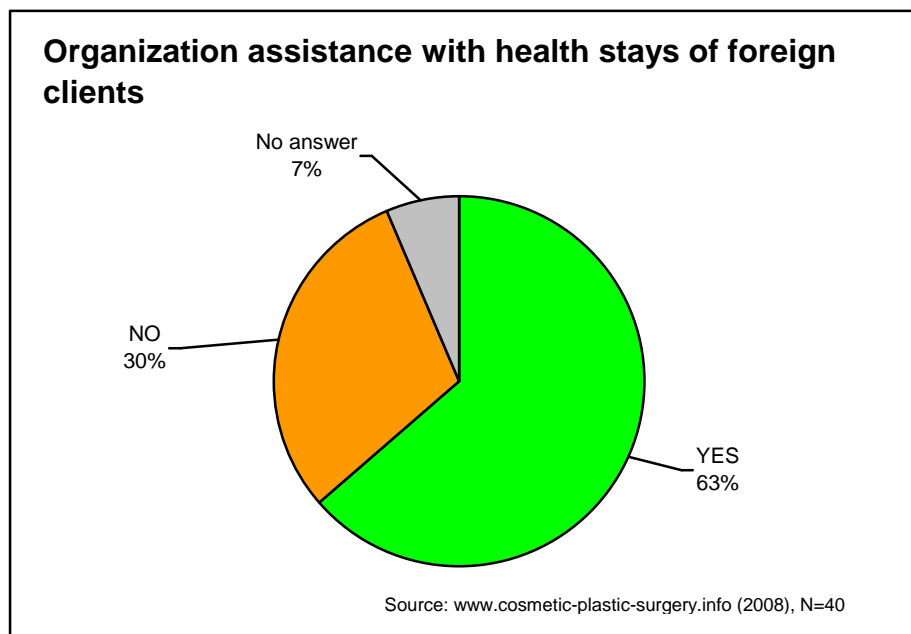
35% of surgeons acquire foreign clients through specialized travel agencies. It is the most frequent method for 20% of surgeons.



## 4.2 Organization of health stays for foreign clients

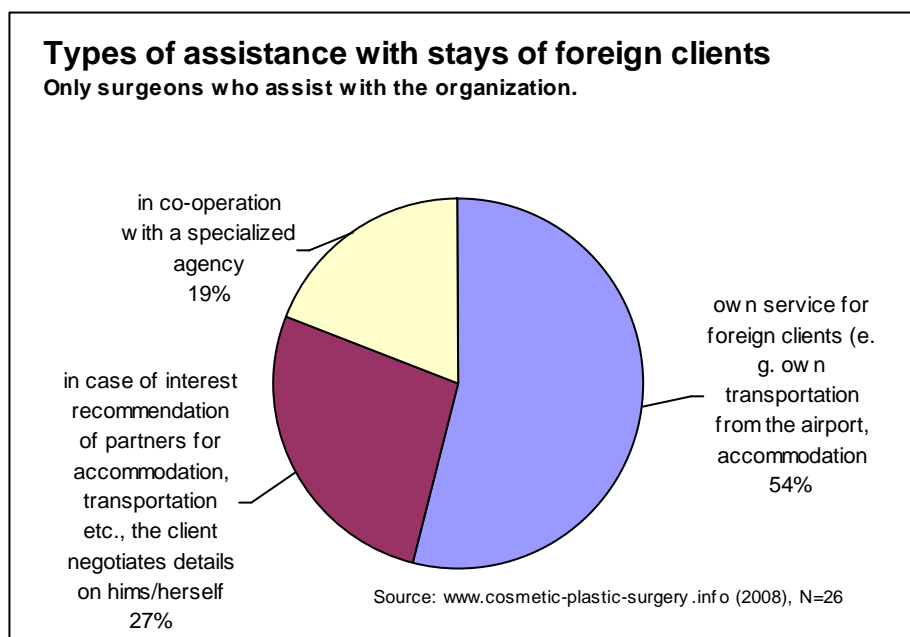
We asked surgeons with foreign clients if they offer any kind of assistance with the organization/performance of the health stays of foreign clients. If yes, we are interested in what kind.

- **56%** of respondents answered **they helped foreign clients** organize their health stay.
- **Offering assistance with the organization of a health stay enhances the number of foreign clients.** The surgeons who offer assistance with the health stay have an average of 103 foreign clients (21% of all clients), whereas the surgeons who do not offer any assistance have an average of 53 foreign clients (9% of all clients).



From respondents who stated they help foreign clients:

- 54% provide foreign clients with their own services (e. g. transportation from the airport, accommodation).
- 27% recommend suitable partners to provide accommodation, transportation etc. but the client negotiates the details.
- 19% help clients in co-operation with a specialized travel agency.



### 4.3 Forms and risks of health tourism

Medical tourism for plastic surgery has different forms which bring different risks of possible post-operative complications. First we asked surgeons how often they encounter particular approaches. And subsequently we were interested in assigned risks.

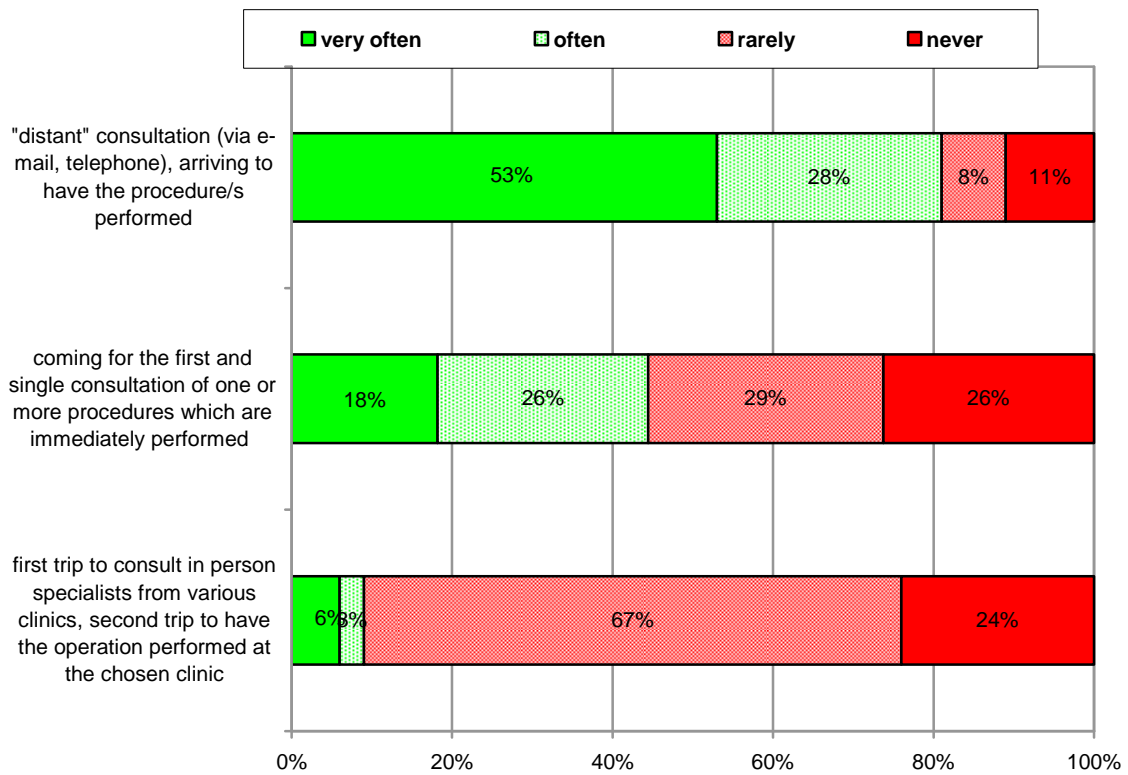
We divided the statements into 2 sections. The first part is related to consultations and examinations before a procedure, the second part is devoted to the post-operative behavior of patients.

#### 4.3.1 Consultation and examinations before a procedure

- **Most often** the surgeons encounter “**distant**” consultations by means of telephone or e-mail followed by the arrival for the performance of a procedure (53% of surgeons very often). The surgeons consider the “distant” consultation as an approach with a **medium risk**.
- The approach when a patient comes **without a prior consultation** or examination directly for the performance of a procedure is considered a **bigger risk** by the surgeons. Despite this, this approach is encountered by at least **44%** of surgeons. The surgeons who do not consider it as risky (and probably also offer it) encounter this approach more often.
- **Double trip**, first trip for the examination and consultation and the second one for the performance of the procedure, is **exceptional** with foreign clients. It is encountered often only by **9%** of surgeons.

### Frequency of various forms of examinations and consultations before procedure

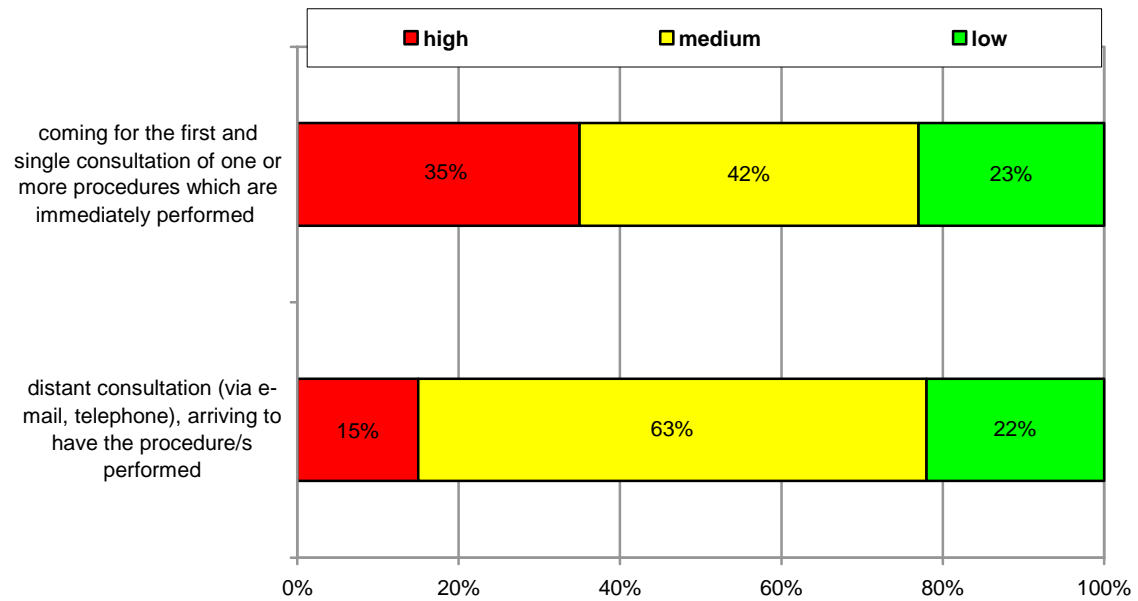
Only surgeons with foreign clients



Source: www.cosmetic-plastic-surgery.info (2008), N=40

## Risk assesment for various forms of pre-operative examinations and consultations

Only surgeons with foreign clients



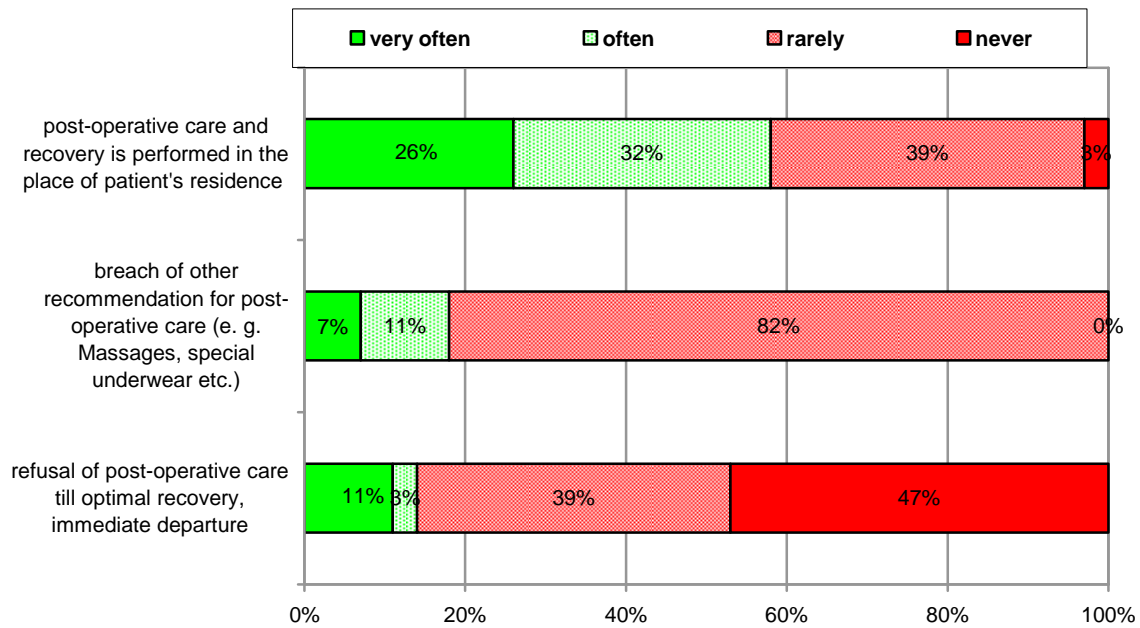
Source: www.cosmetic-plastic-surgery.info (2008), N=40

#### 4.3.2 Post-operative care

- The surgeons consider the risks related to the refusal of post-operative care as bigger than those related to “distant” consultations, or examinations performed on the day of the procedure. As well the occurrence of the post-operative care refusal is lower.
- Whereas the risk assessment of an approach to the pre-operative care is closely related to its frequency (surgeons who regard the approach as risky do not offer it), the refusal of post-operative care is a different matter. **The breach of post-operative care recommendations is considered as risky by all surgeons** and the occurrence of these factors is related more to a patients' responsibility than to the own rules of a surgeon and his risk limits.
- The **immediate departure** and refusal of post-operative hospitalization until optimal recovery is considered to be **the highest risk**. Fortunately, **it is not very often**. Only 11% of surgeons with foreign clients encounter it very often.
- **The breach of post-operative care recommendations** (e. g. massages or special underwear) is considered a bit lower but still a **high risk**. Only **82%** of surgeons encounter this phenomenon **rarely**.
- Subsequent post-operative care and **recovery performed in the patient's place of residence** is considered **a medium risk**. The surgeons encounter it more often with foreign clients (26% of surgeons and often 32% of surgeons).

### Frequency of post-operative care refusal

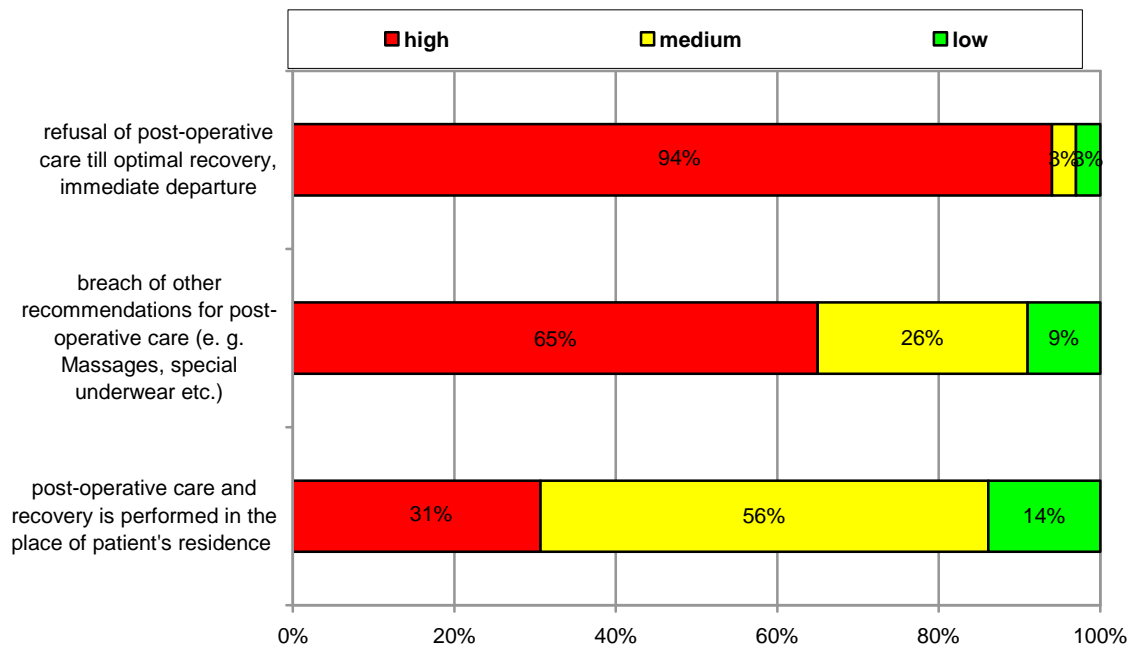
Only surgeons with foreign clients



Source: www.cosmetic-plastic-surgery.info (2008), N=40

### Risk of post-operative care refusal

Only surgeons with foreign clients



Source: www.cosmetic-plastic-surgery.info (2008), N=40

## Appendix no. 1 - Questionnaire

### Plastic Surgery 2007/2008 & Plastic Surgery Tourism in the Czech Republic

*All data included in this questionnaire shall serve for statistical purposes and shall be cited in an anonymous, aggregated form*

Surgeon Name:

Date:

#### 1) Do you focus on clients from:

- a) only the Czech Republic
- b) from the Czech Republic and abroad (regardless of country)
- c) from the Czech Republic and selected foreign countries
- d) only from abroad

#### 2) What countries were your foreign clients most often from in 2007:1

2

3

4

#### 3) Number of plastic surgeries you performed in 2007:

<b>a) TOTAL number of performed plastic cosmetic surgeries in 2007:</b> xxxxx(minor outpatient excisions excluded)			
<b>b)percentage of Czech clients</b>		<b>c) percentage of foreign clients</b>	
<b>% female</b>	<b>% male</b>	<b>% female</b>	<b>% male</b>
<b>d) What percentage from all performed operations was on foreign clients</b> .....%?			

#### 4) Compared to the previous year (2006) the number of clients:

a) from the Czech Republic      increased – was comparable – decreased

b) from foreign countries      increased – was comparable - decreased

**5) What was the age group of your most frequent clients:**

(tick one possibility in each column - the most frequent clients' group)

female:		male:	
18-30		18-30	
31-50		31-50	
over 50		over 50	

**6) List the 3 most frequently performed operations and their number - on clients from the Czech Republic (in 2007):**

female (operation number/year)    male (operation number/year)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |

**7) List the 3 most frequently performed operations and their number - on clients from abroad (in 2007):**

female (operation number/year)    male (operation number/year)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |

**8) In your opinion, how well informed are Czech clients:**(grades 1 to 5 as at school – 1=excellent – 5=unsatisfactory)

a) generally on the operation they are interested in	
b) on possible risks and complications related to the operation	
c) on necessary post-operative care and restrictions during the recovery period which must be foreseen and respected	
d) on the necessity of being informed about the expertise of the surgeon or clinic (specialized vs. non-specialized plastic surgeon...)	
e) on the necessity of being informed in detail about the operation price and what it includes	

**9) In your opinion, how well informed are foreign clients:**(grades 1 to 5 as at school – 1=excellent – 5=unsatisfactory)

a) generally on the operation they are interested in	
b) on possible risks and complications related to the operation	
c) on necessary post-operative care and restrictions during the recovery period which must be respected	
d) on the necessity of being informed about the expertise of the surgeon or clinic (specialized vs. non-specialized plastic surgeon...)	
e) on the necessity of being informed in detail about the operation price and what it includes	

**10) How well do your clients' follow the post-operative care you recommend:**(grades 1 to 5 as at school – 1=excellent – 5=unsatisfactory)

a) Czech clients - female		c) foreign clients - female	
b) Czech clients - male		d) foreign clients - male	

**11) How often do you encounter requests to repair work done by another surgeon from another institution?**

number ..... in a year / Czech clients

number ..... in a year /foreign clients

**12) What are the most frequent reasons for dissatisfaction and re-operation requests for procedures performed at another institution?**(tick the chosen answer)

a) poor quality of surgeon's work, no confidence in the result of re-operation	
b) bad communication or the surgeon's behaviour	
c) exaggerated expectations of the patient	
d) second re-operation (first operation and subsequent re-operation performed by one surgeon)	
e) other, specify: .....	

**13) Please state the percentage of clients you refused from the total number in 2007:**(regardless of reason – health, unrealistic ideas, etc. ..)

a) Czech clients..... %

foreign clients.....%

**14) How did your foreign clients learn about you in 2007:**(tick the chosen answers and evaluate from 1 to 5; 1=most frequent - 5= least frequent method)

1) through a specialized travel agency

2) on the Internet

3) from the press and media

4) from a personal recommendation

5) from your presentation on [www.plasticka-chirurgie.info](http://www.plasticka-chirurgie.info)

6) other – specify.....

**15) Do you offer help to foreign clients including the organization/performance of their medical stay?**

YES - NO

- if YES, how:

a) in co-operation with a specialized travel agency

b) own services for foreign clients (e.g. own transportation from airport, accommodation)

c) in case of interest, we recommend partners to provide accommodation, transportation etc, however client negotiates details on his own

d) combination: .....

**16) Medical tourism for plastic surgery has different forms which bring different risks of possible post-operative complications. How often do you encounter the cited approaches in your practice and what, in your opinion, is the risk:**

a) initial journey to consult, in person, several specialists from different institutions, followed by another journey to undergo the procedure at the chosen institution

I encounter: very often – often – rarely - never

b) “distant” consultations (via e-mail, phone), traveling to undergo the procedure/s

I encounter: very often – often – rarely – never

risk: high – medium - low

c) traveling for one single consultation regarding one or several procedures followed immediately by the procedure

I encounter: very often – often – rarely – never

risk: high – medium - low

d) subsequent post-operative care and recovery is performed in the patient’s place of residence

I encounter: very often – often – rarely – never

risk: high – medium - low

e) refusal of post-operative hospitalization until optimal recovery, immediate departure

I encounter: very often – often – rarely – never

risk: high – medium - low

f) breach of other recommendations for post-operative care (e.g. massages, special underwear etc.)

I encounter: very often – often – rarely – never

risk: high – medium - low

g) other, specify: .....

I encounter: very often – often – rarely – never

risk: high – medium - low