

In Profile: The Kings

Dr Martyn King and nurse prescriber Sharon King reflect on their varied careers and achievements in aesthetics

"Aesthetics is a challenge, you have to keep up to date and improve your skills, but I love it"



If you combine the experiences of aesthetic practitioner Dr Martyn King and nurse prescriber Sharon King, there are not many areas of aesthetics that have been left untouched. They both have, each in their own right, played their part in developing the specialty and, together, are still coming up with ways to improve it. "Sharon and I have had quite a few lightbulb moments," says Dr King.

"Usually when we are sitting together with a glass of wine and then suddenly," he laughs, "we will just come up with our next absolute genius idea!" From setting up the Aesthetic Complications Expert (ACE) Group to the creation of distribution company Cosmedic Pharmacy, there have been many 'lightbulb' moments along the way, but for Dr King, it all started with a dream and sheer determination to become a medical practitioner.

"It was a pipe dream to become a medic," says Dr King, explaining, "I didn't think I would ever achieve it. I did my A levels, I did very well, but I didn't get into university the first time around. I didn't want to be knocked back again, so I did an extra couple of A levels; I then had six altogether, I got some experience, and then had offers of unconditional places at a number of universities."

Dr King always had his heart set on becoming a surgeon, but it wasn't until he completed his medical degree at Leicester University and started working in hospitals that he changed his mind. He ended up training to become a GP. "One thing I didn't want to do all the way through medical school was be a GP, and obviously, that is where I ended up! But actually, it was the best decision I ever made," he says. Dr King is still a GP and has been a partner at a practice in the West Midlands since 2003. "The great thing about being a GP is you can split your time and develop other skills on the side," he says. Some of these skills were in aesthetic medicine, which led to the arrival of the Cosmedic Skin Clinic, "Cosmedic, as it was known then, is about 14 years old now. I set it up after doing some courses in aesthetic, I started with a course in toxins, and then the natural progression was to do fillers and this is when I met my wife Sharon." Nurse prescriber Sharon King, who worked as an FCS for medical

aesthetic company BioForm Medical before they were acquired by Merz Pharma Group, was introducing Radiesse for the hands into the UK. She went to Cosmedic to present it to Dr King and his then business partner, but it wasn't until a year later, when they met again, at an awards ceremony that they really got to know one another. A few months later they started dating and have now been together for nine years and married for six.

Reflecting on his career, Dr King believes he got into aesthetics at just the right time, saying, "Back in the day, there wasn't that many of us doing aesthetics, we knew all the people who were doing it and we helped each other out. I think the industry has changed quite a lot now." He continues, "Treatments and procedures have changed; it used to be just Botox [sic] or filler, and the filler was either collagen or Restylane. Now, we have more than 100 fillers on the market. From my point of view, there is no other speciality in medicine that is growing at such a rate as aesthetics. It is a challenge, you have to keep up to date and improve your skills, but I love it."

Looking back, it was one of Dr King's 'lightbulb' moments, that he considers to be his ultimate triumph so far – the ACE Group. He explains, "Nobody used to mention complications, it was sort of brushed under the carpet. It wasn't until it was being spoken about at a conference around nine years ago that it became obvious that everyone was doing something completely different and managed them in their own way. I believed the way complications were dealt with needed to have evidence-based medicine behind it, you had to be offering best practice. So, forming the ACE Group was about looking at the evidence; we took the best papers and advice and put it together to make simple and straightforward guidelines on what you should do and when to do it in the event of a complication. We have well over 600 members now and are one of the largest non-surgical aesthetic organisations in the UK."

Dr King's next window of opportunity came in the shape of Cosmedic Pharmacy. He explains, "It was almost a running joke that no matter what I ordered from a pharmacy, it would be hit or miss whether I got it or not." He adds, "Also, I would have to order certain things from one pharmacy and then others from the manufacturers, so I said, 'why can't we get it all in one place?'. He got together with a local pharmacist he knew through his GP practice five years ago and set up Cosmedic Pharmacy, which has gone, in Dr King's words, 'from strength to strength'.

Today, there is never a dull moment for Dr King; as well as running his clinic, leading training sessions, the ACE Group and Cosmedic Pharmacy, he writes a lot of articles for journals, speaks at conferences, and is a KOL for several companies. He says, "I guess I always try and be at the forefront of the specialty; there is always something new, there are always different things coming along and I think it is an exciting time. There is a lot more coming in aesthetics in terms of genetics, skin and ageing, and a lot more to do with nanotechnology. So, watch this space, there are interesting things on the horizon."

“Every day is a school day – there is always some thing to learn”



Sharon King comes from a family of builders, but it was her natural urge to care for others that led her into medicine. “I always loved caring, I was always caring for animals, and I knew from an early age I wanted to go into nursing,” she says.

Not only a qualified nurse but a qualified medical secretary, King completed her degree at Wolverhampton University and has

had a varied career in healthcare. She explains, “I did six years in dentistry with the NSA and then went into maxillofacial surgery; it was something I was very interested in and it was always the surgical disciplines that interested me more than the standard medical disciplines.”

King ended up working in surgical theatres but then specialised in plastic and reconstructive surgery, working alongside many practitioners who have gone on to become specialty leaders. “We were all very new to aesthetics then,” says King, “I used to scrub for Mr Ash Labib and then Mr Dalvi Humzah; I was Dalvi’s scrub nurse for a considerable length of time and that’s how I came into aesthetics.” King was in her early 30s when she met Mr Humzah. “Aesthetics was very new and exciting back then and it was just an additional bolt on to the things I was doing,” she explains, adding, “I thought, ‘this is going places and I wanted to be a part of it.’” Learning alongside Mr Humzah, about 16 years ago, King would help him out with his private patients and some aspects of his training courses. King explains, “This was in Wordsley Hospital, in the West Midlands, which was the regional plastic surgery unit back then. Then, I got a post at Nuffield Health Wolverhampton Hospital, did plastics there and worked alongside some maxillofacial surgeons.” Much like her husband, King decided to do some courses run by filler and toxin companies, which, as she notes, “Was the progressive route everyone took back then.” From there, King gained her role with BioForm Medical, brought Radiesse into the UK, and was the first FCS to use it. “And that is how I met Martyn,” she reiterates. “When we got together, I was still working for BioForm but at weekends, I came across to see Martyn and I would help him out in his clinic, and then gradually I fully stepped into Cosmedic.”

A big part of King’s career has been her involvement with the British Association of Cosmetic Nurses (BACN). She says, “I have been a member for several years and I have been a board member for five years. The BACN is a great organisation with a great nursing fraternity and a wealth of knowledge. They really are at the forefront of aesthetic practice. I am very fortunate and happy to be a part of that,” she exudes. “There is lots of activity going on at the moment – the annual conference has grown, the education has grown, we have been doing work with the Joint Council for

Cosmetic Practitioners (JCCP) – it has been great to be part of it,” King adds.

When it comes to choosing the highlights of her career, King struggles to whittle them down, “To this date, I have been very fortunate with my career and have had some wonderful opportunities. I have been able to work alongside some very talented people, particularly back in the early days, with some practitioners who are now very well-known international speakers,” she says. As well as the huge role education has played in King’s career, she has also had some fantastic personal achievements. She explains, “Winning Aesthetic Nurse Practitioner of the Year at the Aesthetics Awards in 2013 was a very humbling moment, to be held in that esteem, I am so grateful to this day; I am very proud.”

What treatment do you enjoy giving the most?

S: I get an awful lot of satisfaction from dermal filler treatments as you can be an artist when performing them.

M: If I had to pick one I would say PDO thread lifts; you can get some fantastic results.

What do you enjoy the most about the specialty?

M: The people I treat. You give some of them a mirror at the end of the treatment and they have a little tear of happiness in their eyes.

S: Happy patients. I think in general medicine you can’t always make someone better, and there are very sad times, but aesthetics gives you the opportunity to boost a patient’s confidence.

Do you have a motto that you follow?

S: Every day is a school day – there is always something to learn, it might be good, it might be bad, it might be impartial, but there is always something to learn.

M: When you are a trainer, if you don’t learn something yourself, it is a bad training day. The other one is never to do a treatment on someone you wouldn’t do to yourself.

Is there anything you would love to see change?

M: I would love to see aesthetic medicine recognised as a medical disciplinary in its own right, have college endorsement and proper training for it.

S: It is nice to think we can move towards some sort of official register, as Martyn says, but I think we are a long way off.

M: We need a royal college and it needs to be recognised. In my opinion, it should have happened years ago.

Where do you see yourselves in 10 to 15 years’ time?

M: Sharon will probably be on a beach or a cruise ship!

S: [Laughs] Yes, definitely!

M: I won’t, I love it, I’ll still be here working away, I have no plans to stop...

S: I can never see myself stepping out of it completely.