

The REAL Clinic: a dual-purpose model

BY NAVEEN CAVALE AND ROBBIE WALKER

Naveen and Robbie discuss the benefits that come with a clinic offering both ophthalmic and plastic / cosmetic surgery services at REAL, a purpose-built clinic near Battersea Power Station, South London.

Not unlike plastics / cosmetic surgery, ophthalmology is changing. While the larger hospitals are keen to do ophthalmology as it's financially attractive, they sometimes lack the know-how and equipment to do it properly, while the ophthalmic 'chains' are concentrating on specific high-volume, low-complexity operations such as cataracts, simply with the bottom line in mind.

Larger hospitals, while keen to provide ophthalmology, can find investing in ophthalmology troublesome due to the initial high financial outlay for quality equipment compared to other specialties. In response, the ophthalmic chains are getting better at dealing with high-volume procedures, while sometimes neglecting the holistic care and alternative ophthalmic specialties that allow great patient-centred care. This is why we believe that clinicians should be taking back control.

At REAL, we have built a hospital with ophthalmology considered from the ground up, but still having all the facilities and attributes of a traditional hospital, enabling us to provide a facility that surgeons are happy with and patients receive a great journey through their care pathways.

Smaller facilities designed and run by clinicians can be more effective and more suitable to the individual needs of the patient, and this is what we have done with REAL, for both plastics and ophthalmology. While smaller hospitals have had a reputation for doing things on the cheap, we are changing that stigmatism at Battersea. We have invested in best-in-class equipment, concentrating on exactly what clinicians need, and believe this lean, nimble, safety-driven, clinically led approach can be both financially viable for us and give great value for money for patients and their surgeons, without any compromise to the quality of care.

Being doctor owned and focussed means we are providing the equipment for surgeons that suits the purpose, rather than best for budget or profit margin, and it also enables us to be flexible to the individual needs and preferences of the surgeon



Patient comfort and flow is at the heart of the clinic's design.



As great as the facilities are, it's the people in them that make for the best patient experiences.



The clinic is loaded with premium diagnostic equipment.



Theatres provide full general and local anaesthetic capabilities.

The spacious operating rooms (general and local anaesthetic) with the latest equipment and natural daylight (that can be covered at the flick of a switch) provide surgeon comfort and a great patient experience.



and the convenience of the patients. We can schedule urgent operations when required – we don't have to have minimum list quantities for when surgeons want to operate outside their pre-booked set times, or see ad hoc patients, and yet we can also work at scale offering high-volume clinics and surgery supported by experienced nurse and tech teams. We try our hardest to keep the surgeon happy so they can concentrate on spending their time making the patient happy.

In plastics we are seeing things go full-circle with the cosmetic surgery chains coming to us, utilising our theatres for their patients. In doing so, their reputation benefits while we maintain our high standard of clinical output. With ophthalmology, we have been approached by a busy high-volume eye company and are starting to see their surgeons and patients bring work to Battersea.

We're also keen to offer the full suite of ophthalmology rather than be a one-trick pony, which gives the best experience to the patients, where they can be looked after by multiple specialists that have a dedicated interest in their specific conditions, rather than individual doctors that are seeing people for financial gain. We aim to offer a full-service hospital experience to the patient.

If you wish to apply for practicing privileges, please contact: robbie@batterseaclinic.com nav@batterseaclinic.com

AUTHORS

Naveen Cavale,
Consultant Plastic Surgeon, REAL Clinic, Battersea and King's College Hospitals, and Guy's & St. Thomas' Hospitals, London, UK.

Robbie Walker,
Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon, REAL Clinic, Battersea and Imperial College Hospitals NHS Trust, London, UK.