

The Golden Years, Polished With Surgery

By **ABBY ELLIN**

At age 83, Marie Kolstad has a rich life. She works full time as a property manager and keeps an active social calendar, busying herself with 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

But one thing needed improvement, she decided: her figure. At her age, she

Nipping and tucking slackened jowls, jiggly underarms and more.

said, “your breasts go in one direction and your brain goes in another.” So on July 22, Ms. Kolstad, a widow who lives in Orange County, Calif., underwent a three-hour breast lift with implants, which costs about \$8,000.

“Physically, I’m in good health, and I just feel like, why not take advantage of it?” said Ms. Kolstad. “My mother lived a long time, and I’m just taking it for granted that that will happen to me. And I want my children to be proud of what I look like.”

Ms. Kolstad is one of many septuagenarians, octogenarians and even nonagenarians who are burnishing their golden years with help from the plastic surgeon. According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, in



STEPHANIE DIANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

WHY NOT? Marie Kolstad, an 83-year-old widow, had a breast lift with implants last month.

2010 there were 84,685 surgical procedures among patients age 65 and older. They included 26,635 face-lifts; 24,783 cosmetic eyelid operations; 6,469 liposuctions; 5,874 breast reductions; 3,875 forehead lifts; 3,339 breast lifts and 2,414 breast augmentations.

Except for a brief turndown during the recession, those numbers have been

rising for years now, and experts say the trend seems likely to accelerate as baby boomers begin to pass age 65. But the increase also has raised concerns about safety and the propriety of performing invasive elective surgery on older patients, who may suffer unintended physical and psychological consequences.

There are as many reasons for getting plastic surgery as there are older patients, experts say. Some people are living longer and remaining healthier, and they want their physiques to align with their psyches. Some are preening for potential mates and want their feathers to look their freshest. Some are still working or looking for jobs and want to be seen as more youthful contenders.

And some are simply sick of slackened jowls, jiggly underarms and saggy eyelids. Gilbert Meyer, a retired film producer in Boynton Beach, Fla., who gave his age only as “over 75,” saw Dr. Jacob Steiger, a facial plastic surgeon in Boca Raton, Fla., for an eye and neck lift last year. He spent \$8,000.

“I was looking at myself in the mirror and didn’t like what I was starting to see and did something about it,” Mr. Meyer said. “Why not look as good as you can when you can?”

Mary Graham, a 77-year-old restaurant owner in Thomasville, Ga., got a

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