MAYFAIR LIFE

ISSUE 107 • JUNE 2018

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THE SUMMER SPORTS & SOCIAL ISSUE



The Boodles, Stoke Park, 26-30 June





GAME-CHANGING RESULTS



An award-winning medical entrepreneur, who has developed a unique skin healing system that could save the NHS a fortune, tells how she struggled to get a job as a research scientist because she was a woman. Sujata Jolly, who invented a range of skin treatments, was sent to the production line despite her degree when she tried to break into the male-dominated field of chemical and industrial research.



"Everywhere I went, they just looked at me with disdain," says Sujata, whose firm Clinogen is based in Windsor. "It was men's work and I had no business being there. I went for a job with Beecham and every researcher was a man in a white coat. They said the only job I could have was on the shop floor packing; they weren't interested in my qualifications."

Sujata, originally from Kenya, eventually broke into research with ICI and GKN, still in a male-dominated environment. "I worked there for many years then joined an aerospace engineering firm where I developed a silicone rubber digester for Rolls Royce engine housings. It was a challenging problem and took two years to come up with the product but, being a woman, I didn't get full credit for it. I was asked who was helping me as they couldn't believe a woman, had solved a problem that had been troubling the industry for decades. When I wrote the report, my manager took credit for it. I was furious. I was being paid five times less than some of my fellow workers and they were taking my ideas for themselves. This was the early 1970s and the gender pay gap and discrimination were way worse than today. I decided I needed to work for myself."

Sujata started her company while bringing up her two young daughters. "It was tough but I was determined. I was trained in medical sciences and had a particular interest in dermatology so was committed to not let that training and my ideas go to waste," she adds.

Sujata developed formulae for treating dermatological conditions such as acne, rosacea and pitted skin, and for anti-ageing. "The difference it makes is incredible. One 18-year-old patient with acne was told that he would be scarred for life and was struggling with his anti acne medication. But we were able to treat him and give him back his skin. The personality change and confidence boost was amazing to witness."

Her latest product, Youki Bio-Cell spray, promises game-changing results with its wound-healing properties. Sujata, who is medical director and CEO of Clinogen Laboratories, in Windsor, has case studies of successfully treating clients with diabetic ulcers that got so bad that toe or foot amputation was considered. Around 7,000 foot amputations on diabetic patients are performed in England each year with a £1.3 billion cost to the NHS.

The product, which is sprayed on an open wound, creates scaffolding across the wound allowing the body's healing process to work quickly.

"The standard procedure is to put a dressing on it but that can increase the risk of infection," adds Sujata, who won the Medical LiveWire Global Award 2016 for Innovation in Wound Healing prize for Youki. "But we can now treat severe cases including some where the doctors were considering amputation.

"It is registered as a medical device and has the potential to save the NHS a lot of money, reducing the heartache for patients and their families. I'm very proud of what we have developed and how much we can help people and the planet as it is biodegradable and has a miniscule carbon footprint as there are no clinical waste cost. Life has come a long way since I couldn't even get a job because I was a woman to a fairer society, although there is some distance to go on the gender pay gap. But I hope my story inspires others to follow their dreams and work hard to create something." ■

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