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By JENNIFER STEINHAUER

In the waiting room of Dr. Mark D. Fromer's office in Trump Tower — not so long ago filled with elderly patients seeking treatment for cataract disease — young professionals with expensive haircuts whisper into cell phones as they wait for their 15-minute laser eye surgery appointments...

Elective procedures make up nearly 25 percent of many medical practices like plastic surgery and dermatology in urban areas, experts in the field said, up from 10 percent five years ago.

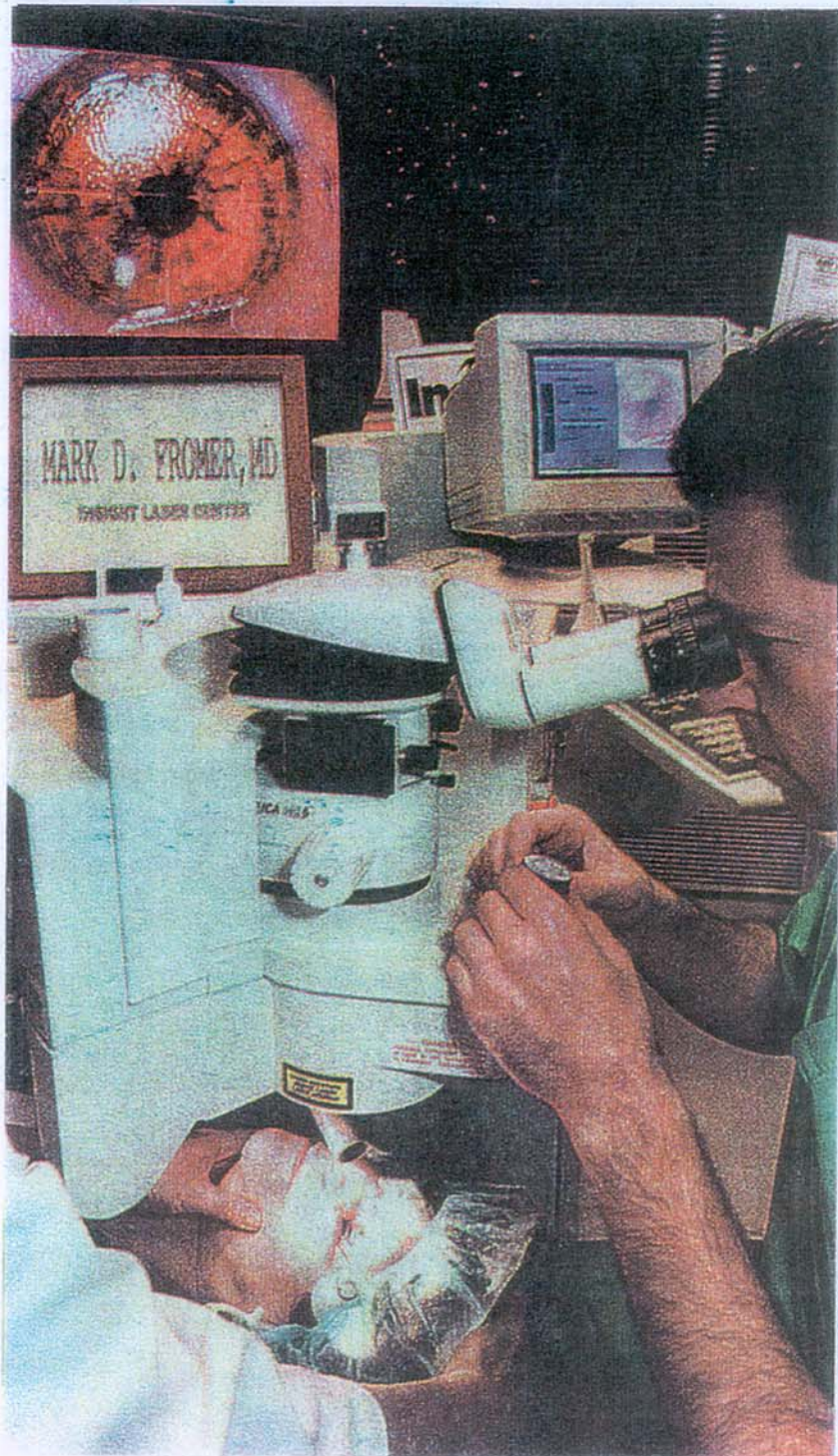
The trend is led by laser eye surgery, which in just a few years has transformed ophthalmology; in the last two years alone, the number of Americans who underwent laser eye surgery to correct their vision problems increased more than 500 percent, and doctors who do the procedure are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars marketing themselves...

Doctors find that they have to overhaul their entire practices, from the way their receptionists answer the phone to the couches patients sit on to the length of time they make patients wait for an appointment...

Dr. Fromer said that he gave his office one such face lift. The furniture and waiting room are turned out in subtle, tasteful tones. The equipment is sleek and spotless, as though it just fell off a space ship.

Patients recovering from their surgery rest in reclining chairs, covered in soft cotton blankets. His office employees look as though they would fit in quite well behind the counter of an upscale gym.

"When a patient walks through the door," he said, "they have to see that the doctor has done this before, that the equipment is top-notch and the office has to be extremely friendly."



Dr. Mark D. Fromer performing laser eye surgery. Many doctors are turning to elective procedures to keep their practices lucrative.