



The Rising Trend of People's Addiction to Performing Cosmetic Surgeries in the Maxillofacial Area

Mehrdad Shahraki ¹, Kiarash Kazemi ², Sadra Amirpour Haradasht ^{1,*}

¹ Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, School of Dentistry, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran

² Oral and Dental Diseases Research Center, Kerman University of Medical Science, Kerman, Iran

* Corresponding author: Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, School of Dentistry, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran. Email: sadrahadasht@gmail.com

Received 2024 July 17; Revised 2024 August 11; Accepted 2024 August 13.

Keywords: Addiction, Maxillofacial Prosthesis, Cosmetic Surgery Addiction, Plastic Surgery, Rising Trend

Dear Editor,

Cosmetic surgery has seen a surge in popularity in recent decades as more individuals seek to enhance their appearance. Notably, there has been a significant increase in the demand for cosmetic surgeries in the maxillofacial area. The growing desire for aesthetic improvements has contributed to the popularization and normalization of surgical procedures to enhance facial features. This trend, sometimes referred to as "cosmetic surgery addiction," has raised important ethical, social, and psychological concerns that warrant further exploration. This article aims to examine the rising popularity of maxillofacial cosmetic surgeries, investigate the causes of addiction to these procedures, including their psychological implications, and address the ethical considerations associated with excessive cosmetic interventions.

Understanding Maxillofacial Cosmetic Surgeries

Among the various branches of cosmetic surgery, procedures involving the maxillofacial area have gained considerable attention. Maxillofacial cosmetic surgeries include a wide range of procedures aimed at enhancing or altering facial features, such as rhinoplasty (nose job), chin augmentation, cheek implants, jawline contouring, and lip enhancements. While these surgeries can boost self-esteem and confidence, an increasing number of individuals are becoming addicted to them. A recent study by the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons (ISAPS) reported a 4% global increase in cosmetic surgeries, totaling 11 million procedures annually. As cosmetic surgery becomes more prevalent, it is important for individuals

to understand the risks, particularly the potential for addiction (1, 2).

Factors Contributing to Cosmetic Surgery Addiction

The causes of cosmetic surgery addiction are multifaceted and complex. Societal pressure to conform to unrealistic beauty standards, low self-esteem, and a lack of confidence in one's appearance are among the most common reasons individuals seek facial cosmetic surgeries. Patients with body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) or similar psychological conditions are particularly vulnerable to developing an addiction to cosmetic surgery. For these individuals, achieving cosmetic perfection becomes an obsessive preoccupation that demands continual correction (3).

Psychological Factors

Individuals addicted to cosmetic surgery often have underlying psychological factors such as low self-esteem, body dysmorphia, anxiety, and depression. They perceive cosmetic procedures as solutions to their perceived flaws and become fixated on achieving the "perfect" appearance. The temporary boost in self-confidence following surgery reinforces a cycle of seeking additional procedures. This addiction may indicate deeper psychological issues that require therapeutic intervention (4).

Low Self-esteem

Low self-esteem is often a driving force behind surgery addiction. Individuals affected by it tend to view themselves as unattractive and inadequate, frequently criticizing their appearance and fearing judgment from

others. This can lead to a cycle of undergoing multiple surgeries in an attempt to enhance their appearance and boost self-esteem, yet it often results in continued dissatisfaction. Addressing these underlying issues and seeking professional help is crucial for those struggling with self-esteem, rather than relying on cosmetic procedures as a quick fix (5).

Anxiety

Low self-esteem and anxiety often lead individuals to seek cosmetic surgery, as they may perceive nonexistent physical flaws that distort their self-image. These procedures are viewed as solutions to insecurities, with the aim of boosting confidence. However, the psychological benefits of surgery may be temporary, prompting individuals to pursue additional procedures to address new concerns. This cycle can become addictive, as individuals chase cosmetic changes in pursuit of lasting happiness (6).

Depression

Depression affects individuals globally, leading to persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and emptiness. Symptoms often include a loss of interest in activities, changes in appetite and sleep patterns, and difficulty concentrating. The causes are complex, involving factors such as genetics, brain chemistry, life events, and underlying medical conditions. Seeking professional treatment is essential for managing depression and improving mental well-being (7).

Soci-influences

Social factors play a significant role in the development of cosmetic surgery addiction. Modern society's idealization of beauty standards creates pressure for individuals to conform. Exposure to social media, celebrities, and advertising further shapes perceptions of beauty, making cosmetic procedures seem like normal solutions for perceived flaws. As a result, many people seek enhancement when they feel inadequate compared to others. Therefore, societal influences are a key driver in the growing addiction to cosmetic surgery.

Obsession Beauty

The obsession with enhancing appearance is a longstanding cultural trend, further facilitated by technological advancements and increased accessibility to cosmetic procedures. However, this growing popularity raises concerns about addiction and the risks associated with excessive surgeries. Motivations for pursuing beauty enhancements vary, often influenced by societal pressures, low self-esteem, and body dysmorphia. Prospective cosmetic surgery candidates

must critically assess their motivations and carefully weigh the associated risks (4).

Social and Advertising

Social and advertising influences significantly shape cultural attitudes toward cosmetic surgery. The pressure to conform to certain beauty ideals can lead to low self-esteem and insecurities, driving individuals to pursue cosmetic procedures. Media platforms, often used for self-promotion and validation, have fueled the rising demand for enhancements. Advertising further promotes an idealized and flawless standard of beauty, reinforcing unrealistic expectations. The widespread presence of cosmetic surgery advertisements across various media channels has made these procedures more accessible, fostering the belief that they can fix any perceived flaw. Overall, social and advertising influences have greatly contributed to the growing popularity of cosmetic surgery (8).

Cultural Factors to Conform to Certain Beauty Standards

Cultural factors play a significant role in the growing addiction to cosmetic surgery. Modern society's idealization of specific beauty standards pressures individuals to undergo multiple procedures to align with these norms. The media and entertainment industries perpetuate unrealistic beauty ideals, shaping perceptions of body types, facial features, and skin tones. Additionally, cultural beliefs that link physical appearance to success, desirability, and social status further compel people to seek cosmetic enhancements, often resulting in addiction. Despite the increasing accessibility and affordability of these procedures, the cultural pressure to conform to beauty standards remains pervasive (9).

Signs of Cosmetic Surgery Addiction

Amid growing societal pressures surrounding physical appearance, the obsession with cosmetic surgery has become prevalent across various demographics. This addiction can lead to significant emotional and financial consequences for individuals. Signs of cosmetic surgery addiction include frequent visits to surgeons, anxiety or depression when unable to undergo surgery, unrealistic expectations from procedures, neglect of other life priorities, and a continuous desire for more surgeries despite having achieved the desired outcomes. Recognizing and addressing these signs is essential to mitigate the harmful effects of cosmetic surgery addiction (10).

Ethical Considerations

The normalization of cosmetic surgeries in maxillofacial areas raises ethical concerns, including

issues related to informed consent, exploitation of vulnerable populations, and the responsibility of medical professionals in promoting unnecessary procedures. Societal pressures to conform to beauty standards may undermine patients' ability to make fully informed decisions about altering their bodies. Individuals with conditions such as BDD are particularly susceptible to exploitation. The growing addiction to cosmetic surgeries further complicates the ethical landscape. Surgeons must thoroughly assess patients' motivations and mental health to distinguish between those seeking genuine improvements and those with underlying psychological issues. Ethical guidelines should discourage enabling addiction by encouraging surgeons to decline unnecessary procedures and refer patients for psychological evaluation when appropriate (11).

Conclusion

Cosmetic surgery addiction in maxillofacial areas is a growing concern that requires attention from the medical community, policymakers, and society. Its impact on psychological well-being and the ethical implications are substantial. Factors such as body dysmorphic disorder and societal pressures play a significant role in driving this addictive behavior. Further research is crucial to better understand these contributing factors and to develop effective interventions.

Footnotes

Authors' Contribution: This study was designed by Mehrdad Shahraki and Sadra Amirpour Haradasht, while acquisition of data and analysis and interpretation of data was done by Kiarash Kazemi and Mehrdad Shahraki in a cooperating proses. Drafting the manuscript was done by Sadra Amirpour Haradasht and he had the responsibility to supervise the study.

Conflict of Interests Statement: The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Funding/Support: This research did not receive any specific grant from agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

References

1. Ferneini EM. Facial Cosmetic Surgery. *J Oral Maxillofac Surg.* 2021;**79**(9):1977-8. [PubMed ID: 34462077]. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joms.2021.06.017>.
2. Alamri AA, AlJehani R, Alnefaie MN, Moshref S, Fida AR. Perception and Knowledge of Facial Plastic Surgery Among Health Care Professionals at Tertiary Care Center, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Cross Sectional Study. *Mater Sociomed.* 2019;**31**(3):181-5. [PubMed ID: 31762699]. [PubMed Central ID: PMC6853726]. <https://doi.org/10.5455/msm.2019.31.181-185>.
3. Kim S. What factors encourage the acceptance of cosmetic surgery? Differences in sociopsychological influences contingent upon cosmetic surgery experience. *Fashion and Textiles.* 2022;**9**(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40691-022-00318-4>.
4. Wu Y, Mulkens S, Alleva JM. Body image and acceptance of cosmetic surgery in China and the Netherlands: A qualitative study on cultural differences and similarities. *Body Image.* 2022;**40**:30-49. [PubMed ID: 34801810]. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.10.007>.
5. Yoon S, Kim YA. Cosmetic Surgery and Self-esteem in South Korea: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Aesthetic Plast Surg.* 2020;**44**(1):229-38. [PubMed ID: 31637500]. [PubMed Central ID: PMC6957555]. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00266-019-01515-1>.
6. Rehman U, Perwaiz I, Sohaib Sarwar M, Brennan PA. Mental health screening in facial cosmetic surgery: a narrative review of the literature. *Br J Oral Maxillofac Surg.* 2023;**61**(7):455-63. [PubMed ID: 37442708]. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjoms.2023.05.003>.
7. Wever CCC, Wever A, Constantian M. Psychiatric Disorders in Facial Plastic Surgery. *Facial Plast Surg Clin North Am.* 2020;**28**(4):451-60. [PubMed ID: 33010863]. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsc.2020.06.003>.
8. Arab K, Barasain O, Altaweel A, Alkhayyal J, Alshihai L, Barasain R, et al. Influence of Social Media on the Decision to Undergo a Cosmetic Procedure. *Plast Reconstr Surg Glob Open.* 2019;**7**(8). e2333. [PubMed ID: 31592374]. [PubMed Central ID: PMC6756652]. <https://doi.org/10.1097/GOX.0000000000002333>.
9. Alotaibi AS. Demographic and Cultural Differences in the Acceptance and Pursuit of Cosmetic Surgery: A Systematic Literature Review. *Plast Reconstr Surg Glob Open.* 2021;**9**(3). e3501. [PubMed ID: 33777604]. [PubMed Central ID: PMC7990019]. <https://doi.org/10.1097/GOX.0000000000003501>.
10. Suissa AJ. Addiction to Cosmetic Surgery: Representations and Medicalization of the Body. *Int J Ment Health Addict.* 2008;**6**(4):619-30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-008-9164-2>.
11. Atiyeh B, Ibrahim A. Aesthetic/Cosmetic Surgery and Ethical Challenges: The Social Media Era. *Aesthetic Plast Surg.* 2020;**44**(4):1375-7. [PubMed ID: 32766894]. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00266-020-01765-4>.