

The Heart of It All: Body Dysmorphic Disorder in Cosmetic Surgery

Anna D. Lee BS^{1,2}; Elijah W. Hale² MS¹; Leela Mundra MD¹; Christodoulos Kaoutzanis MD¹; David W. Mathes MD¹

¹ Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, University of Colorado School of Medicine, 13001 E 17th Pl, Aurora, CO 80045

² University of Colorado School of Medicine, 13001 E 17th Pl, Aurora, CO 80045

Background

Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) represents a prevalent mental health condition characterized by distress arising from self-perceived physical imperfections. BDD serves as a contraindication to aesthetic surgery. Recognizing BDD holds paramount importance for plastic surgeons, as it is instrumental in averting the exacerbation of this condition while ensuring appropriate referrals.

Objective

This study aimed to investigate the prevalence of BDD in cosmetic surgery patients and to pinpoint key characteristics associated with BDD. This information provides plastic surgeons with specific factors to consider during preoperative evaluations. Methods We employed TriNetX database to identify patients with BDD who underwent cosmetic surgery identified by Current Procedural Terminology codes. Demographics and patient characteristics were identified using the International Classification of Diseases 10 codes. We calculated odds ratios (OR) by using chi-squared tests to assess risk factors among patients with BDD.

Results

Of 226,374 patients who underwent plastic surgery between August 2002 and August 2022, fewer than 0.1% were diagnosed with BDD. Of the BDD patients, 52.1% were diagnosed after cosmetic surgery. Compared with the control group, BDD patients were more likely to undergo rhinoplasty (OR=1.784, $p = 0.004$) and nonlocalized lipectomy (OR=1.448, $p = 0.021$) and less likely to undergo blepharoplasty (OR=0.451, $p = 0.002$). Findings indicated a strong association between BDD patients undergoing cosmetic procedures and comorbid psychiatric conditions such as depression (OR=4.279, $p < 0.05$), anxiety (OR=5.490, $p < 0.05$), and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (OR=3.993, $p < 0.05$).

Conclusions

These findings underscore the ongoing significance of BDD in the context of cosmetic surgery, potentially indicating a lower surgery rate among BDD patients compared with previous estimates. Nevertheless, avenues for further improvement persist. Our data affirm the noteworthy occurrence of postsurgery BDD development, thereby highlighting the ongoing necessity for psychiatric evaluation in surgical patients.