



## Original Article

## Experiences and attitude among Saudi female University students towards cosmetic surgery



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### المخلص

**أهداف البحث:** تهدف هذه الدراسة لتقدير مدى انتشار الجراحة التجميلية بين طالبات الجامعة السعوديات وتقييم خبراتهن وموقفهن من الجراحة التجميلية.

**طرق البحث:** أجريت دراسة مقطعية مقارنة خلال عام ٢٠١٢ شملت تقنية أخذ العينات متعددة المراحل في جامعة الملك عبدالعزيز. في البداية، تم اختيار الكليات ذات الصلة عن طريق تقنية أخذ عينة عشوائية بسيطة. في المرحلة الثانية، تم اختيار اثنين إلى ثلاثة فصول من كل سنة عشوائياً. أخيراً، وباستخدام استراتيجيات أخذ العينات العشوائية المنتظمة تم اختيار كل رابع طالبة من القائمة إلى أن تم اكتمال العينة المطلوبة. تم استخدام استبانتين تعاباً لتأنيًا لجمع البيانات؛ استبانة متعددة الأبعاد للعلاقة الجسمانية الذاتية واستبانة المواقف من الجراحة التجميلية.

**النتائج:** كان معدل الاستجابة ٩٩.٣٪. ثلاث عشرة طالبة (٢.٢٪) تعرضن للجراحة التجميلية و ١١.٤٪ كن مرشحات محتملات للجراحة التجميلية. وافق ٥٢٪ من الطالبات على أن تكلفة الجراحة التجميلية هي إهدار للمال، بينما أيد ٣.١٥٪ منهن من تريد أن تخضع للجراحة التجميلية. سجلت أعلى الدرجات للسلوك تجاه المظهر ٣.٩٣ ± ٠.٤٧ متبوعاً بتقييم المظهر (٣.٨٦ ± ٠.٦٨). الطالبات اللاتي تعرضن للجراحة التجميلية كن أكثر قلقاً من زيادة الوزن. اعترف نصف الطالبات تقريباً اللاتي تعرضن للجراحة التجميلية بأن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي قد أثرت على قراراتهن بشأن الجراحة التجميلية.

**الاستنتاجات:** في هذه الدراسة، عدد صغير من طالبات الجامعة تعرضن للجراحة التجميلية و ١٦٪ سينظرن للجراحة في مرحلة أخرى من حياتهن. لوسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تأثير كبير في اتخاذ القرار بشأن الجراحة التجميلية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الجراحة التجميلية؛ طالبات الكلية؛ المملكة العربية السعودية؛ استبانة المواقف من الجراحة التجميلية

### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study aimed to estimate the prevalence of cosmetic surgery among Saudi female University students and to assess their experiences and attitudes toward cosmetic surgery.

**Methods:** During 2012, a cross-sectional comparative study at King Abdulaziz University. Initially, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select relevant colleges from within the University. In the second stage, two to three courses from each graduating class were randomly selected. Finally, using the systematic random sampling strategy, each 4th student in the class was selected until the desired sample size was achieved. Two self-administered questionnaires were used for data collection: the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire and the Cosmetic Surgery Attitudes Questionnaire.

**Results:** The response rate was 99.3%. Thirteen students (2.2%) had received cosmetic surgery, and 11.4% were potential cosmetic surgery candidates. Fifty-two percent of students agreed that the cost of cosmetic surgery would be a waste of money; however, 15.3% supported those who wanted to undergo surgery. The highest mean score of 3.93 + 0.47 was recorded for appearance orientation followed by appearance evaluation (3.86 + 0.68). Students who had been subjected to cosmetic surgery were significantly more concerned about overweight preoccupation ( $p < 0.05$ ). Almost half of the students who had undergone cosmetic surgery agreed that social media had influenced their decisions.

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**Conclusions:** In this study, a small number of undergraduate University students had been subjected to cosmetic surgery, and 16% indicated that they would consider surgery later in life. Social media has a major impact on decision-making regarding cosmetic surgery.

**Keywords:** College students; Cosmetic surgery; Cosmetic surgery attitudes questionnaire; Saudi Arabia

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## Introduction

Cosmetic surgery refers to a subspecialty that uses surgical and medical techniques to restore, maintain or enhance an individual's physical appearance. In the past 10 years, we have observed a dramatic increase in the number of cosmetic surgical procedures performed in the Western hemisphere.<sup>1</sup>

According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, nearly 8.3 million cosmetic surgical and nonsurgical procedures were performed in 2003. These figures represent an increase of 299% between 1997 and 2003, and the number has further risen in the last decade. Stereotypically, the image of a patient seeking cosmetic surgery is envisaged as an older woman attempting to turn back the hands of time. The typical patient, however, is considerably younger; 45% of all patients are between the ages of 35 and 50 years old, and 27% are under 35.<sup>2</sup>

There are three factors likely to play a role in the recent upsurge of cosmetic surgery. These factors include medical advancements, patient characteristics, and media influences.<sup>3</sup>

For several years, it has been known that mass media has a large impact in determining both personal appearance and potentially one's decision to select cosmetic surgery. For decades, the public has mirrored the hairstyles, clothing, and body types of the famous, and as a result, many studies have determined that mass media influences, such as magazines, TV shows, and movies, may affect body image satisfaction and self-esteem.<sup>3</sup>

It is extremely important to understand the psychological processes that lead a person to undergo aesthetic medical treatments, including cosmetic surgery.<sup>4</sup>

One previous study suggested that body image was the main psychological variable involved in the decision to undergo cosmetic surgery. Body image is often considered to consist of two components: body image orientation, referring to how important body image is for a person, and body image evaluation, indicating how satisfied a person is with his or her own body.<sup>5</sup>

The objectives of this study were to estimate the prevalence of cosmetic surgery and to assess the experiences and attitudes toward receiving cosmetic surgery among Saudi female college students in Jeddah.

## Materials and Methods

The researchers conducted this study in 2012 at King Abdul-Aziz University, a public institution in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, containing 8 women's colleges (3 Arts and 5 Sciences).

To identify students for the study, the multistage sampling technique was used. In the first stage, to choose one Science College and one Arts College, the simple random sampling technique was used; again, in the second stage, simple random sampling technique was also used to assign students from 2 to 3 courses at each college grade level. In the third stage, the systematic random sampling technique was applied to select every 4th attending student until the desired sample size was reached. Using the EPI program information, the sample size found was 600 students. Data entry and analyses were performed using SPSS software statistical program version 16. Descriptive statistics were described in terms of means and SDs for quantitative variables and in terms of frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables. The Mann-Whitney U-test was applied to compare mean differences of Multidimensional Body Self-Relations subscales according to a history of undergoing cosmetic surgery. Fisher's Exact test was applied to test the association of student opinions on the notion that Mass media affects decision-making about cosmetic surgery. The significance level was determined at  $P < 0.05$ .

A self-administered questionnaire was used to measure experiences and attitudes toward cosmetic surgery. With email permission from the corresponding author, the questionnaire borrowed questions from the MBSR and CSAQ. Prior to participation in the study, verbal permission was received from all involved students.

## Results

The response rate was 99.3% (596 out of 600 questionnaires distributed), and the majority of the interviewed students (86.6%) were single. Almost two thirds (63.6%) were than 21 years old with a mean age of  $20.2 \pm 2.1$ . Almost one half of the students (53.7%) indicated that their monthly family income was more than 10,000 SR, and almost an equal percentage (53.9%) reported that their fathers had university qualifications. Only 37% of their mothers had university qualifications, and 26.5% were employed.

Only 2.2% (13) of surveyed students reported that they had undergone cosmetic surgery, and 12.4% of the total sample revealed that one or more of their family members had been subjected to cosmetic surgery.

Student attitudes toward cosmetic surgery are demonstrated in Table 1, where 11.4% think that they might undergo cosmetic surgery upon the request of their spouse or if they were to have unlimited financial resources. In the opinion of almost half of the students (52.1%), cosmetic surgery is perceived as a waste of money. Only 15.3% of those surveyed would support others who want to undergo cosmetic surgery, and almost 16.2% agree that they might submit to cosmetic surgery upon arrival at middle age. However, almost one

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