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# Knowledge and perceptions of facial plastic surgery among a selected group of professionals in Lagos, Nigeria<sup>☆</sup>

W.L. Adeyemo<sup>a,\*</sup>, B.O. Mofikoya<sup>b</sup>, B.O. Bamgbose<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, College of Medicine, University of Lagos, P.M.B. 12003 Lagos, Nigeria

<sup>b</sup> Department of Surgery, Plastic surgery unit, College of Medicine, University of Lagos, Nigeria

<sup>c</sup> Department of Oral Pathology, Radiology and Medicine, College of Dentistry, University of Iowa, USA

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## KEYWORDS

Facial plastic surgery;  
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**Summary** This was a questionnaire-based study among a selected group of professionals in Lagos, Nigeria to assess their knowledge, attitude and perceptions to facial plastic surgery. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to a group of professionals in the banking industry and the civil service. The respondents were asked if they had heard of 'facial plastic surgery' before and if they were familiar with some selected facial plastic surgery procedures. They were also asked if they had ever considered undergoing facial plastic surgery for any real/perceived facial abnormalities; if they knew any close relatives/friends who had undergone facial plastic surgery and if they considered the result satisfactory or not. A total of 130 respondents participated in the study; of these, 102 (78.5%) respondents had some knowledge of 'facial plastic surgery' while 28 (21.5%) respondents had no prior knowledge of facial plastic surgery. Fifty-five of the 102 respondents had some knowledge of liposuction of the face and neck. Nineteen of the 130 respondents expressed willingness to undergo facial plastic surgery for removal of facial wrinkles and excess fat on the cheeks and neck. Only 17 (13%) of the respondents had ever thought of undergoing facial plastic surgery; of these 17 respondents, nine claimed that their facial appearance was the main reason. Respondents with perceived facial abnormalities were more likely to undergo plastic surgery than those without perceived abnormalities ( $P = 0.000$ ). Twenty-four (18.5%) of the 130 respondents knew of a friend/close relative who had undergone facial plastic surgery before, and the majority (19 of the 24) considered the result of the surgery satisfactory. We conclude that most of the study participants had some knowledge of facial plastic surgery; however, only a few expressed willingness to undergo facial plastic surgery for removal of facial wrinkles and folds/fat on the cheeks and

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\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +234 18978558.

E-mail address: [lanreadeyemo@yahoo.com](mailto:lanreadeyemo@yahoo.com) (W.L. Adeyemo).

neck. The fact that only a few of the respondents knew someone who had undergone facial surgery may reflect the low level of availability of facial plastic surgery procedures in Nigeria. © 2009 British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Cosmetic surgery was not embraced until the early 20th Century when Charles Conrad Miller wrote the first book dedicated to cosmetic surgery, in 1907.<sup>1</sup> Shortly thereafter, Fredrick Kolle published a text on plastic and cosmetic surgery in which he detailed the value of preoperative eyelid-skin marking to determine the proper amount to be excised during surgery.<sup>2</sup>

Facial plastic surgery has received significant attention over the past several decades due to increasing patient demand for youthful appearance.<sup>3</sup> The goal and function of facial plastic surgery is to address all components of ageing and to correct anatomical changes to the face and neck that have occurred as a result of the normal ageing process, leaving the patient with a younger-appearing face and a long-lasting result.<sup>3</sup>

Essentially, the facial aesthetic unit consists of the forehead and brow, the periorbital region, the cheeks; nose, the perioral region and chin and the neck.<sup>4</sup> This aesthetic unit undergoes age-related changes. The two main age-related changes of the upper-third of the face are brow ptosis and hyperdynamic facial lines. The eyelids often show the earliest signs of ageing: skin laxity (dermatochalasis), orbicularis muscle hypertrophy and pseudo-herniation of the orbital fat through the orbital septum.<sup>4</sup> Deepening of the nasolabial crease and accentuation of the nasolabial fold are also changes associated with ageing. Ageing of the skin is the combined result of both intrinsic (genetic) factors and extrinsic influences from the environment (smoking, chemical, gravity and ultraviolet exposure).<sup>5</sup>

In Europe and America, both men and women are becoming increasingly concerned about their physical appearance and are seeking cosmetic enhancement, and most studies report that people are generally happy with the outcome of cosmetic procedures.<sup>6</sup> It is reported that the role played by facial plastic surgery is one of initiating a positive cycle by changing the patient's self-perception rather than one of direct social impact from the changed features.<sup>7</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that Nigerians, especially female models and those in the social upper class, are increasingly seeking plastic surgery for the correction of real/perceived facial abnormalities. Little is known about the public perception of facial plastic surgery in Nigeria. In an era of managed health care and social reform, public perception, or misconception, may ultimately have a significant impact on this specialty.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, this study aimed to assess the knowledge, attitude and perceptions regarding facial plastic surgery among a selected group of professionals in Lagos, Nigeria.

## Materials and methods

This was a self-administered-questionnaire-based study among Nigerian professionals. A well-structured questionnaire

was administered to a group of professionals in the banking industry and the civil service. Information sought in the questionnaire included: age and sex of the respondents, as well as educational and professional status. The respondents were asked if they had heard of 'plastic facial surgery' before and if they were familiar with some selected facial plastic surgery procedures; if they were willing to undergo facial plastic surgery for removal of facial wrinkles and excess facial fat; if they perceived any abnormalities on the face, nose, cheek, eyelids or forehead; if they had ever thought of undergoing facial for any real/perceived facial abnormalities; if they have previously undergone facial plastic surgery; or if they knew any close relatives/friends who had undergone facial plastic surgery and if they considered the result satisfactory or not. The facial plastic surgery procedures were translated into simple English to aid understanding (e.g., blepharoplasty – eye-lid plastic surgery; mid-facial rejuvenation/lifting – plastic surgery of middle face).

## Data analysis

Data were analysed using the SPSS for Windows (version 12.0; SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) statistical software package and was presented both in descriptive and tabular formats. The test of significance was used as appropriate, and *P* value was set at  $\leq 0.05$ .

## Results

A total of 130 respondents participated in the study. This included 68 males and 62 females; with mean  $\pm$  SD age of  $32.3 \pm 18.1$  years (age range: 18–55 years). All participants had received post-secondary education. Of the total, 102 (78.5%) respondents had some knowledge of 'facial plastic surgery' while 28 (21.5%) respondents had no prior knowledge of facial plastic surgery. Of the 102 respondents with some knowledge of facial plastic surgery; 51 (50%), 33 (32.3%) and 25 (24.5%) had heard of the face-lift procedure, blepharoplasty and mid-face rejuvenation, respectively. Fifty-five of the 102 respondents had some knowledge of liposuction of the face and neck (Table 1). None of the respondents had undergone plastic surgery before, and only a few (19 of the 130) of the respondents expressed willingness to undergo facial plastic surgery for removal of eyelid and forehead wrinkles, cheek folds or excess fat on the cheeks and neck. Table 2 depicts the response of participants to any perceived abnormalities in the facial region. Only 17 (13%) of the respondents had ever thought of undergoing facial plastic surgery; and all of them reported perceived facial abnormalities. Of these 17 respondents, nine claimed that their facial appearance was the main reason, followed by nasal deformity (Table 3). Twenty-four (18.5%) of the 130 respondents knew of a friend/close relative who had undergone facial plastic

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