



## Before and After Study

## Gender difference in requesting abdominoplasty, after bariatric surgery: Based on five years of experience in two centers in Sulaimani Governorate, Kurdistan Region/Iraq



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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The increasing incidence of morbid obesity suggests that the quantity of bariatric surgical procedures will continue to multiply each year, many patients who have experienced massive weight loss are left with the dissatisfying consequences of loose and redundant skin, resulting in contour irregularities, an aesthetic and functional problem, and profound dissatisfaction with appearance, residual body image dissatisfaction, There is a subsequent increase in the number of patients seeking additional corrective procedures including abdominoplasty which considered as one of the most popular body-contouring procedures. Correcting skin excess, could improve all the corollaries, including body, and functional problems and gives profound satisfaction with appearance, it has shown to improve both psychological and social aspects of the patients' lives.

**Objectives:** Is there a gender difference in seeking body countering after bariatric surgery for weight loss?

**Patients and methods:** A longitudinal observational study includes 209 obese patients with mean age of  $31 \pm 8.6$  years; ( $31 \pm 9$ ,  $31 \pm 7$  years for female and male patients respectively). Gender ratio M/F = 1.94/1, mean BMI  $40 \pm 9$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>sin (n = 138 female) and  $45 \pm 8$ m<sup>2</sup>s in (n = 71 male) patients, and Waist circumference  $109 \pm 7$  cm in female and  $118 \pm 4$  cm in males.

**Results:** Some female (n = 10, 7.25%) patients were seeking abdominoplasty from the third month after the operations were they have lost ( $21 \pm 2$  kg) of their excess weight, fourteen patients (10.14%), at 6 months and 27 patients (19.56%) at 12 months, but most of male patients were requesting abdominoplasty (n = 7, 09.86%) at 12 months after the operations. Male patients have shifted their ideal from weight loss to abdominoplasty after losing (50–70) of their excess weight 12 months after the operations. The main motivation of requesting abdominoplasty in female and male patients was physical difficulty because of redundant skin, and a smaller number in both genders were motivated by a friend or by a doctor.

**Conclusion:** The motivation for abdominoplasty in females is parallel to the amount of EWL or waist circumference. Female patients are looking for body countering three months after surgery, while male patients more often than not request body shaping following one year after surgery, the age groups are invert in genders; female patients asking for body contouring in younger age group while male patients in older age group.

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### 1. Introduction

The increasing incidence of morbid obesity suggests that the quantity of bariatric surgical procedures will continue to increase each year [1–3], many patients who have experienced massive weight loss are left with functional and esthetic consequences as a result of residual, loose, redundant skin with body contour irregularities and disfiguring appearance [4], which are the aftermath of fast loss of significant amount of fat, in concomitant with suboptimal skin retraction [4–10].

Furthermore, continuous friction and irritation of the skin folds with movement and superadded bacterial and fungal infection together with dependent lymphedema [3,6] worsen the overall patient's body-image [5,6] and results in functional, hygienic and psychological implications [3, 6, 11–15].

Correcting skin excess, could improve all the corollaries, including esthetic, and functional problems and gives profound satisfaction with appearance [3,9,16], it has shown to improve both psychological and social aspects of the patients live.

The area of main concern is the waist/abdomen [7], especially in women [17], with expectations of reduction of the skin folds, preventing its complications, and improving mobility and psychosocial functioning [18,19].

For that reason, there is a subsequent increase in the number of patients seeking additional corrective procedures, following bariatric surgical operations. Among those, abdominoplasty [12,20,21], which considered as one of the most popular esthetic body-contouring procedures [9,16–18,21].

Abdominoplasty [16] is not only cosmetic; albeit its aim is to improve functional, psychological and overall appearance of patients [7,11,12]. The most important expectation of body contouring surgery is improved appearance, followed by improved self-confidence and quality of life [17].

The vast majority of the procedure is still targeted toward women, with little attention toward men, and men still represent a smaller fraction of the cosmetic surgery industry in general [22]. A study stated that among adults (or overall), 84% of men and 72% of women were satisfied with their appearance [19, 23]. While among adolescents, 63% of males and 34% of females experience no problems directly related to excess skin [5]. Björserud et al., stated that women are more liable than men to have surplus skin over the upper arms, thighs, and flanks [24], one may notice that a larger percentage of men are more satisfied with their overall appearance compared to women after bariatric surgery and weight loss [7,14].

Socially, surgical intervention for weight gain and plastic surgery after massive weight loss has become more acceptable [5,6]. Publicity has certainly had a major role to play in raising awareness, patients are highly motivated to undergo body contouring surgery [6], as these procedures are associated with an improvement of both quality of life and in better patient satisfaction [18,21].

Optimal time for abdominoplasty is still controversial [2,9–11,22,25], may be because of the fact that most who asked are self-referral. Which may needs more collaboration and guidance regarding timing, importance of abdominoplasty, and widening the referral pathways for raising awareness about complications of the redundant skin.

This is an attempt to investigate a gender difference in the patients seeking body countering after bariatric surgery for weight loss.

### 2. Patients and methods

Approval for the current work was obtained from the Ethics

Committee of University, College of Medicine. The work has been reported in line with the STROCSS criteria [26], the study was designed as a descriptive longitudinal study conducted on 209 patients who underwent sleeve gastrectomy, and were seeking for abdominoplasty, within 5 years from January 2, 2012 to December 1, 2017, in the XXX Private Hospital and XXX Teaching Hospital. The mean age of (31 ± 8.6 years); (31 ± 9, 31 ± 7 years) for female and male patients respectively. Gender ratio M/F = 1.94/1, mean BMI 40 ± 9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>sin (n = 138 female) and 45 ± 8 m<sup>2</sup>s in (n = 71 male) patients, and Waist circumference 109 ± 7 cm in female and 118 ± 4 cm in males.

For the gathering of the required data, every patient was interviewed face-to-face, by two Trainees (from XXX Board for Medical Specialties/surgery, and two junior doctors) who were working in the centers (XXX Private Hospital and XXX Teaching Hospital) in the meantime, to sign informed consent, and to fill an originally-designed questionnaire in English translated to the Kurdish language. It is composed of demographic, medical, and biological data, beside the importance of correcting skin excess, complications of this redundant skin, motivation and requesting for abdominoplasty. The statistical evaluations were all done with SPSS version 21. Chi-square test adjusted for clinical characteristics: age groups at requesting abdominoplasty, BMI, waist circumference, all statistical tests were assessed at the conventional 0.05 level of significance, considering any P value ≤ 0.05 as statistically significant.

### 3. Results

Most of the female patients have (pear type obesity), while nearly all the male patients have (apple type of obesity), all the patients have waist circumference larger by 12–14 cm above normal regarding genders as internationally accepted measures as shown in Table 1. While their waist circumference larger by 30–34 cm above normal regarding genders for Asian patients [27].

Although there was a reduction in the BMI and waist circumference of both genders, it was not significant statistically (P value = 0.07798) as shown in Table 2.

Some female (n = 10, 7.25%) patients were seeking abdominoplasty from the third month after the operations were they have lost (21 ± 2 kg) of their excess weight, fourteen patients (10.14%), at 6 months and 27 patients (19.56%) at 12 months, but most of the male patients were requesting abdominoplasty (n = 7, 9.86%) at 12 months after the operations (Table 3).

About tow third (174/209) of the patients developed redundancy of skin. One-third of both genders after the first three months from the operations (female: n = 35, 30.7%, and male; n = 20, 33.4%). The patients seeking plastic surgery were 42 female and 11 male patients: 36% of female patients and 18.34% of male patients were seeking body

**Table 1**  
Median, main and standard deviation of types of obesity, waist circumference and gender difference before the surgery.

Variables	Total number	Gender	Number	Median	Mean	Standard deviation
Apple obesity	80	♀	11	7	6	02.65
		♂	69	27	35	22.30
Pear obesity	129	♀	127	55	23	53.27
		♂	2	2	2	00.00
Waist circumference (in centimeters)	209	♀	138	59	24	54.10
		♂	71	28	34	22.89

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