

## Is Plastic Surgery, for Whatever Case, Unethical?

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### **Introduction**

is a surgical specialty. It can be used to improve how someone looks and to reconstruct facial and body tissue defects. These issues may be caused by illness, injury (trauma), or birth disorders.

Plastic surgery restores and improves function, as well as appearance. It can include surgery on any part of the anatomy except the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord)

Justice is a concept involving fairness, equality, and equitable treatment.<sup>1</sup>Cosmetic surgery is usually considered to be elective in nature and thus not covered by third-party payers. Patients normally pay for cosmetic procedures out-of-pocket. One could argue that cosmetic surgery is not available to all, based on personal finances, and therefore does not meet this ethical requirement. On the other hand, one can argue that since patients are responsible for the cost of their own care, then cosmetic surgery does not affect the overall availability of health care resources. When using this argument cosmetic surgery passes this ethical test.

### **Background**

The word “plastic” in plastic surgery, is a Greek word meaning “to form”. Plastic surgery is divided into two sections, reconstructive surgery and cosmetic surgery.<sup>2</sup>The initial idea of the genesis of plastic surgery is returned to repair the deep wounds of the Neanderthals due to the rock, cool guns, and spears back and bite animals.<sup>2</sup> Historical records remained in countries like Egypt, India, Greece, Rome, in relation to wound healing; and the use of other body tissues to reconstruct the nose and lip, repair the cleft lip and tumors, correct congenital anomalies, etc. All point to the initial steps in the era of plastic surgery.<sup>2</sup>Plastic surgery in the nineteenth century progressed and at this time for first time, the skin graft was performed in Milan.<sup>2</sup>Plastic surgery, including reconstructive and cosmetic surgery, writings on clay in Mesopotamia in ancient Persia showed the wound healing and congenital anomaly repair to be born in that period.<sup>2</sup>

Plastic surgeries were developed between the two world wars. Advertisements in magazines and newspapers in this area lead to the spread of these practices and had a key role in most people’s concerns wished to change their physical appearance. Females are more likely to apply for cosmetic surgery, as they wish to be more attractive at their jobs and to have a higher social status, to seem younger, and due to psychological, social and personality factors.<sup>1</sup> Social and community factors play important roles as these factors are related to cultural norms changes, globalization and the expansion of the Western culture receiving through the media and travels.

In today's consumer- oriented societies, attention to body image has become very popular, and the media has important role.<sup>3</sup>

#### Prevalence

The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery reported an increase of 446% in cosmetic procedures since 1997 and an overall increase of 8% in 2007, with a 17% increase in men undertaking cosmetic surgery (8). This increase is similar in the United Kingdom. The British Association of Plastic Surgeons recorded a 35% increase in procedures performed by its members from 2004 to 2005 (9). With the increased prevalence, accessibility and evolution of cosmetic surgery in Western society, it is becoming increasingly relevant to explore the various internal and external factors that motivate people to undergo cosmetic surgery.

Advertising and public deception is the ethical problem of plastic surgery. Media forge some surgeons by intensive advertisings of body image, claiming a lie, exaggerating individual capability using photoshop images in the offices, that all provide ethical problems in the field of plastic surgery. At present, aesthetic surgery has become increasingly popular around the world and this medical profession has become a profitable business as "cosmetic surgery industry".<sup>2</sup> Plastic surgery corrects the defects and pays less attention to the culture and beauty in relation to physical appearance and attention to characteristics such as gender, age, and race. In this field, health services are offered commercially.

#### **Risk factors**

As with any type of surgery, plastic surgery has associated risks.

The degree of risk depends on the size of the affected area, the surgeon's level of experience, and the overall health of the person having the procedure.

Some procedures carry specific risks, but general risks include:

- Pain and Discomfort
- Bleeding
- Infection
- Scarring

Contact your surgeon, healthcare team or GP immediately if you have any concerns after surgery, such as unexpected pain, swelling, discharge, or other side effects.

cosmetic surgery is growing and there are several factors that are involved in this rapid development. Factors such as economic development, social and cultural norms changes, globalization and exposure to culture media and repeated trips to the Western countries are the main causes for this rapid development. Cultural changes and developments in different societies have increased concerns over their appearance and subsequently, these increase the demands for plastic surgeries by people.<sup>5</sup> But, despite all these factors, the demand for cosmetic surgery is generally motivated by psychosocial factors. The desire for beauty in human nature has long existed since the creation of the features. They have interest to modify and improve their appearance and surroundings, respectively.<sup>1</sup> Consistent with the idea that woman are under greater pressure than men to attain current ideals of beauty and thinness, more women than men usually express an interest in cosmetic procedures, while this interest is an appearance orientation.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, factors which influence the consumers today worry people to their physical appearance or body image. Therefore, the extent that the community is exposed to advertisings in the media for new models, it would have more raised ethical questions.<sup>7</sup> Traditionally the cosmetic surgeries performed by plastic surgeons due to a high demand and to obtain more income, the profit aspects of the business are highlighted. Therefore, other surgeons in different expertise are also attracted and unfortunately in some areas, aesthetic surgical procedures are performed by this groups.<sup>5</sup> In light of these trends, the human body, like an inanimate object, material or merchandise is tarnished.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, exaggerated advertisings and unrealistic media would cheat the community and encourage them to apply for cosmetic surgeries. Today, the importance of this area of expertise has been reduced, its actual position is lost and the plastic surgery is going in the transition from acute ethical problems.<sup>6</sup>

#### epidemiology

An annual report issued by the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery places Iraqis as the top nationality receiving plastic surgery in Lebanon. According to the report, 0.3% of cosmetic operations of 2016 were carried out in Lebanon.

In Iraq, however, those who perform unlicensed cosmetic operations will find it difficult to give stem cell injections and laser treatments in the future. The Ministry of Health is shutting down unlicensed beauty salons and massage parlors in Baghdad, according to a report by Al-Hurrah News. The report said that more than 52 salons in Baghdad were closed on Nov. 17, when the Ministry of Health began the operation.

According to the Tajmeeli website, which provides information on cosmetic procedures, tummy tucks are very common in Iraq and carried out by qualified specialists starting at \$750 per operation, a price affordable for middle-class families.

But Iraqis still prefer to travel abroad for plastic surgery if they can afford it, according to Dr. Qassim Hussein Salih, the head and founder of the Iraqi Psychological Association. "Iraqis are still steadily traveling abroad for cosmetic surgery despite the rising numbers of beauty salons and clinics in Baghdad and the provinces," Salih told Al-Monitor, explaining that confidence in Iraqi beauty clinics is still low.

Here are a plastic surgeon's tips to avoid (or at least postpone) surgery:

1. Wear sunscreen, especially on your face.
2. Get a topical skin care solution that actually works. People spend thousands of dollars a year on over-the-counter skin care products that don't work. There are products that are proven to reverse or prevent sun damage and aging, but they aren't at your local drug store. Make an appointment with a doctor, and ask to see data proving the product's capabilities. Find something that you can commit to on a regular basis.
3. Consider laser skin resurfacing. Laser skin resurfacing can help tighten your facial skin, improve skin quality, and even skin tone. The best part is that it's an in-office procedure with no recovery time. So you can walk out of the office with a younger-looking face and go right back to work. Keep in mind that your face and neck skin is different than any other skin on your body, so be sure you choose an office that has face-specific lasers.
4. Try Botox. Botox is becoming more and more popular because it not only reduces signs of aging, it also prevents them. Botox also relaxes muscles. For example, for wrinkles that are caused by repetitive movement in the face, Botox can relax the muscles that cause the movement and therefore, stop wrinkles from forming altogether. A regular Botox routine can prevent surgery for many years.

### **Aim**

The goal of the cosmetic surgeon is to make changes in body shape or rejuvenate areas that have been affected by aging. A plastic surgeon can choose to limit a practice to one of these areas, or practice the entire scope of plastic surgery

### **Methodology:**

- Type of study – evaluation of patient get plastics surgery in Iraq Governorate.
- study design :  
- Cross-sectional epidemiological study used to evaluate Plastic Surgery among people.
- Study pattern:

Electronic questionnaire

- Place & time of study:
  - Done in Thi-Qar Governorate / Al- Nassiriya city, from 15/4/2023 9/5/2023
- Study population: inclusion criteria
- Sampling & sample size estimation:

By convenience sampling the data was collected and the sample size was 806 cases among young people . The data was collected by the forma of electronic questionnaire.

**Statistical Analysis :**

Qualitative data had been analyzed by using SPSS (statistical package for social science) , were percentage and chi square had been calculated

**Table(1): demographic data of sample (n=400)**

<b><u>Variables</u></b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b><u>Age Group</u></b>		
15- 19 Y	48	12.0
20-24 Y	282	70.5
25-29 Y	58	14.5
30-35 Y	12	3.0
<b><u>Gender</u></b>		
Female	328	82.0
Male	72	18.0
<b><u>Job</u></b>		
House Wife	8	2.0
Student	318	79.5
Free Worker	10	2.5
Employee	64	16.0
<b><u>Address</u></b>		
Baghdad	28	7.0
Thi-Qar	358	89.5
Karbala	14	3.5

**Results:**

This study involved 400 participants. 12% of them aged between 15 to 19 years, 70% aged between 20-24 years, 14.5% aged between 25 to 29 , and remaining aged between 30 to 35 years. 82% were females while 18% were males. Majority of them were students. About 90% were lived in Thi-Qar province. 7% were lived in Baghdad and about 3.5% were lived in Karbala. Table 1 showed the demographic characteris Table 2 showed the association between plastic surgery and age group. There is no significant difference between this variable. Age groups had no relation with (p=0.711)

<b>Table (2): Association Between Plastic Surgery And Age Group.</b>			
<u>Variables</u>	No	Yes	P-Value
<b><u>Previous Plastic Surgery</u></b>			
<b><u>Age Group</u></b>			
<b>19 -15 Y</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0.711</b>
	<b>50.0%</b>	<b>50.0%</b>	
<b>24-20 Y</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>142</b>	
	<b>49.6%</b>	<b>50.4%</b>	
<b>29-25 Y</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>	
	<b>51.7%</b>	<b>48.3%</b>	
<b>30-35 Y</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	
	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	

Table (3): showed the association between plastic surgery and job. There is no significant difference between this variable. Job of participants had no relationship with (p=0.358).

<b>Table (3): Association between plastic surgery and jobs</b>			
<b><u>Variables</u></b> <b><u>surgery</u></b>	<b><u>Previous plastic</u></b>		<b>P-Value</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
<b><u>Job</u></b>			
<b>House wife</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.358</b>
	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	
<b>Student</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>166</b>	
	<b>47.8%</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	
<b>Free worker</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	
	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	
<b>Employee</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	
	<b>53.1%</b>	<b>46.9%</b>	

Table (4): showed the association between plastic surgery and gender. There is no significant difference between this variable. Gender had no relation with ( $p=0.158$ )

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Previous Plastic Surgery</u>		<u>P-Value</u>
	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	
<u>Gender</u>			
<u>Female</u>	<b>158</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>0.158</b>
	<b>48.2%</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	
<u>Male</u>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>	
	<b>55.6%</b>	<b>44.4%</b>	

**Table (5): details about plastic surgery**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Previous Plastic Surgery</u>		
<u>Yes</u>	<b>202</b>	<b>50.5</b>
<u>No</u>	<b>198</b>	<b>49.5</b>
<u>Causes of Plastic Surgery</u>		
<u>Cosmetic</u>	<b>94</b>	<b>46.5</b>
<u>Therapeutic</u>	<b>108</b>	<b>53.5</b>
<u>Location of Center</u>		
<u>Inside Iraq</u>	<b>174</b>	<b>86.1</b>
<u>Outside Iraq</u>	<b>28</b>	<b>13.9</b>
<u>Post-Operative Complications</u>		
<u>Yes</u>	<b>20</b>	<b>9.9</b>
<u>No</u>	<b>182</b>	<b>90.1</b>

Table (5) showed 50.5% of participants had a history of previous plastic surgery. More than half of plastic surgery performed for therapeutic indication and 46.5% for cosmetic indication. 86.1% performed their surgery inside Iraq while 13.9% performed their surgery outside Iraq. Only 20 participants developed complications post-operative.



Table (6) showed Attitude of participants about plastic surgery. 63.5% of participants accept to perform plastic surgery while 6.5% refused plastic surgery, 30% believed the surgery is harmful while 15.5% believed the surgery is safe.

**Table (6): Attitude of participants about plastic surgery**

<u>Variables</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
<b><u>Do You Accept To Perform Plastic Surgery ?</u></b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>63.5</b>
<b><u>May be</u></b>	<b>110</b>	<b>30.0</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b><u>Do You Believe Plastic Surgery Is Harmful?</u></b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>30.5</b>
<b><u>May be</u></b>	<b>198</b>	<b>49.5</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>15.5</b>
<b><u>Do You Think Plastic Surgery is Suitable?</u></b>		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>82.0</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9.0</b>

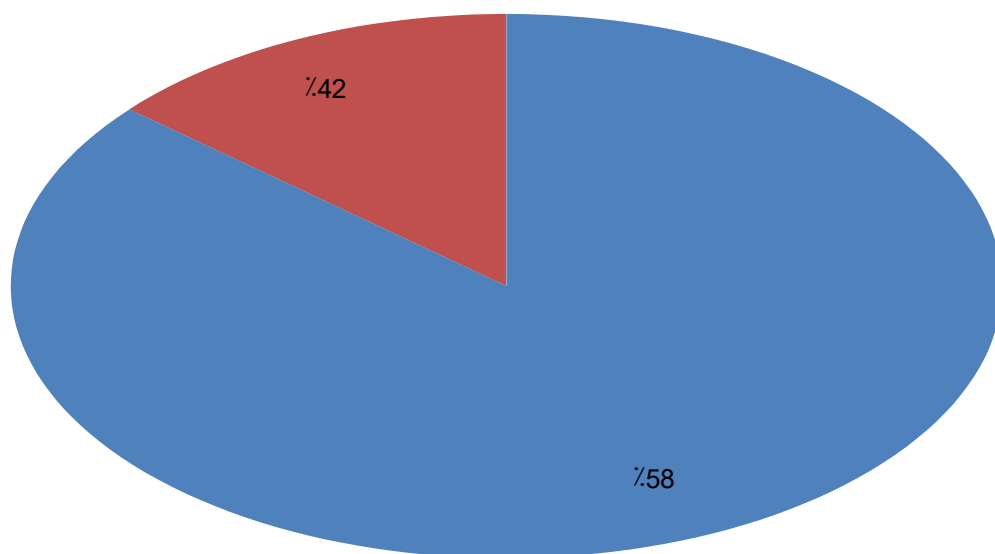


Figure (1) showed about 42% of participants believed plastic surgeries should be forbidden in the Country while 58% believed that plastic surgeries should not be forbidden in Iraq.

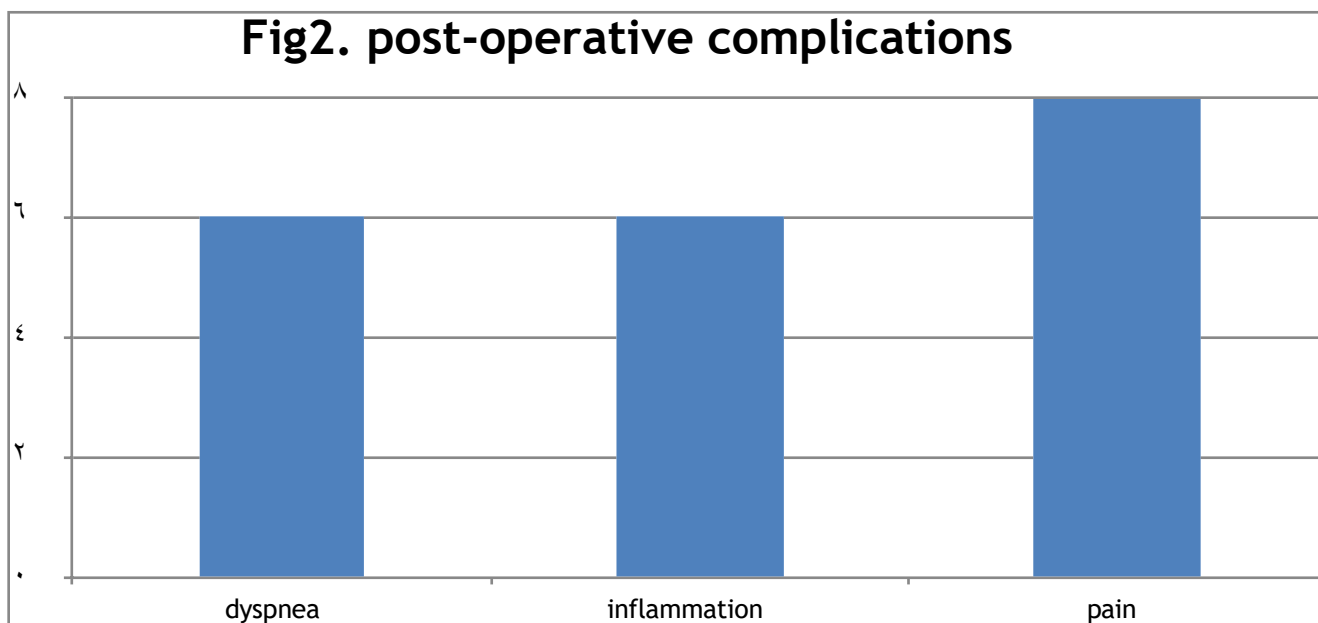
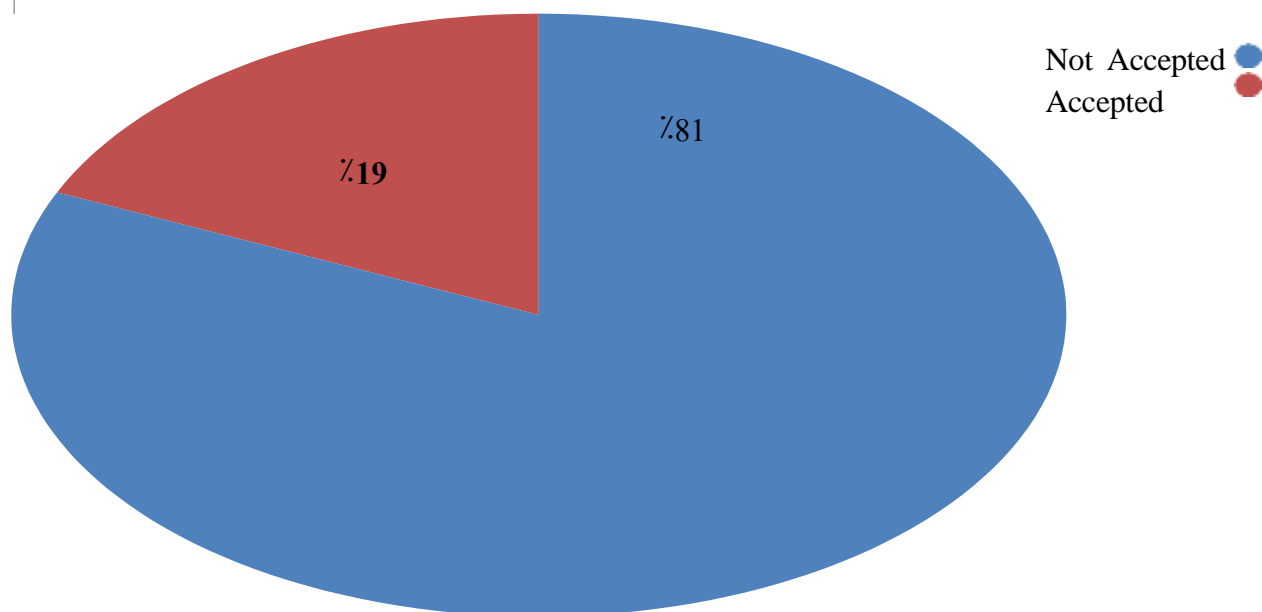


Figure (2) showed the main post-operative complications in this study. Dyspnea, inflammation and pain.



**Figure( 3 ) shows that 19% of people thought that plastic surgery is accepted in our society while 81% thought it is not accepted**

### **Discussion:**

Cosmetic surgery is becoming progressively prevalent in different parts of the world, both among men and women. [1] Cosmetic surgery has become a trend in Iraq nowadays because it has become socially acceptable to go under the knife for aesthetic reasons and that people have assigned greater importance to the notions of beauty. [2] as shown in this study, there are high rate of acceptability for doing plastic surgeries.

The objectives of this study were to assess the knowledge and attitudes about plastic surgery and main factors that effect on doing surgeries. This study determine the prevalence of plastic surgeries in our country, there are 202 out of 400 doing plastic surgery at one point of their life .

According to attitude of population this study had good acceptability to performed plastic surgery this percentage was higher than another study performed by Al Doheyan et al. who showed about 78% accepted to performed plastic surgery.[3]

46% of plastic surgeries was indicated for cosmetics cause this higher than study performed in Saudi Arabia that showed only 9% had received cosmetic surgery.[3] other study conducted in Nigeria (2016) [4] among basic sciences students found that very rare number of students have had or know person who did these surgeries. Also, a study conducted at King Abdul Aziz University in

Jeddah Saudi Arabia [5] found that only (2.2) of students had undergone cosmetic surgery. This difference may be related to religion or cultural factors.

Post-operative complications in this study is involved dyspnea, inflammation and pain compared to other study that showed Common complications include infections, local anesthetic and systemic toxicity (LAST), electrolyte and hematologic abnormalities, intravascular fluid shifts, and wound complications. Postoperative complications may be immediate, such as LAST, or delayed up to months, as may occur with surgical site hematomas.[6,7].

Iraq is one of the most common countries that accept cosmetic surgery especially among women but the cosmetic procedures are unfortunately carried out nowadays in Iraq by people who actually are not authorized and this was the cause of appearance of a lot of complications in patients exposed to different cosmetic procedures.

Even Hepatitis B and Hepatitis B became more common in our society due to the fact that cosmetic procedures are carried out in the absence of sterilization techniques by non authorized people. So cross infection became more common between patients exposed to different cosmetic procedures.

### **This study had some limitations:**

Duration of data collection was limited and the study did not cover all provinces of Iraq or all educational levels regarding the samplen of people chosen. Electronic questionnaire had unreliable response duo to th fact that e researcher cannot explain unclear questions.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

Plastic surgery is a common surgical intervention especially in recent years. The acceptance of cosmetic surgery increases and stigmata of this procedure seems to disappear.

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Even Hepatitis B and Hepatitis B became more common in our society due to the fact that cosmetic procedures are carried out in the absence of sterilization techniques by non authorized people. So cross infection became more common between patients exposed to different cosmetic procedures.

Accordin to our study, unnecessary cosmetic procedures should be avoided to prevent unnecessary complications and to prevent unnecessary infections like Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B.

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