

Most patients satisfied after breast reduction

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Montreal -- Most women who have breast reduction surgery are highly satisfied with the results and feel much better about themselves, a survey presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Plastic Surgeons shows.

As well as physical benefits breast reductions provide, the study showed clear evidence of the psychological benefits of surgery, noted Dr. Catherine Haywood, a resident in the University of Toronto's plastic surgery program.

"Satisfaction with surgery was extremely high," Dr. Haywood said, and by one-year post-surgery, patients felt significant improvement.

Although it is already known that there is high satisfaction with breast reduction surgery, this study is different in that it was conducted in a blinded fashion and surgeons were not involved, Dr. Haywood said.

In the study, 100 patients were approached by two surgeons and were given questionnaires preoperatively and at three months and one year postoperatively. Eighty-three women responded to the first questionnaire, 59 to the second and 46 to the third.

Dr. Haywood said women had to respond to "a questionnaire from hell," which took an hour for each to be filled out, so she was not surprised to see a declining response rate with each questionnaire.

The psychological function questionnaires obtained information on demographics, the reasons for undergoing surgery, satisfaction with outcome and standardized psychological variables, including body image, self-esteem and subjective well-being.

Patients had a median age of 38 and average 38DD bra size. Physical reasons for surgery were back pain (92%), shoulder grooving (95%), rashes (71%) and pain/tingling in hands (41%). Psychological reasons for surgery were insecurity (90%), increased self-consciousness (87%), being subject to inappropriate comments (65%) and trouble deriving sexual pleasure (61%).

Postoperative results showed that most felt their health had improved (75% at three months post-op and 80% at one-year post-op), and their looks had improved (78% and 72%, respectively). A minority felt their social lives had improved (20% and 17%) or that their sex lives had improved (17% and 22%).

The vast majority felt more confident (83% and 78%), had decreased self-consciousness (80% and 78%) and worried less about their appearance (74% and 74%).

There was vast satisfaction with surgery (90% and 89%), and expectations were met (88% and 87%).

Most would have the surgery again (86% and 85%), would recommend it to another (91% and 89%) and said the goal of breast reduction surgery was achieved (91% and 93%).

Overall, patients felt tremendous improvement in their appearance, felt healthier and more active, and their self-esteem significantly improved, Dr. Haywood concluded.