

## Attitudes and Awareness Towards Cosmetic Surgery Among College Students in Kuwait

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**ABSTRACT:** *Cosmetic surgery is a very popular procedure performed nowadays with a significant increase around the world, having a dramatic and profound impact on student's health and attitude. The aim of this study is to examine the attitude and level of awareness among students at the college of Health Science's, which is under PAAET (The Public Authority for Applied Education & training) towards cosmetic surgery and the risks taken behind these procedures. Questionnaires were administered to 250 college students that were analyzed using SPSS version (25). Result showed that female students had more cosmetic surgeries performed than male students, having a positive attitude towards cosmetic surgery, neglecting the risks of these surgeries. This study showed that media and friends have a great impact on the attitude of the students towards cosmetic surgery. Further studies should be undertaken to investigate the attitude of a wider population beyond colleges and universities towards these surgeries.*

**KEYWORDS:** cosmetic surgery, attitude, awareness, students, risks.

### INTRODUCTION

Cosmetic surgery is a very popular procedure demanded globally and has increased within the last decades especially, in the western countries [1][2]. It has become socially accepted in many cultures [3][4]. Asian countries like India and China have the biggest cosmetic surgery market [5] that enhances appearance towards some aesthetic ideal [6]. There were 15.6 million cosmetic procedures done in the United States of America in 2014, performed by customers that spent money by over \$12.9 billion on cosmetic procedures. [7]. Many people are influenced by mass media, such as TV advertisements and shows, giving unrealistic images of beauty, magazines, internet, billboards, radio and movies, which may affect the satisfaction of body image and self-esteem.[8]. Advertisements have a serious impact on people that can lead to anxiety, low confidence and low esteem. Unhappy people that are dissatisfied with their body image are more interested in cosmetic surgery [9] and tend to change their body image to reach their ideal goals [10]. Cosmetic surgery includes Breast augmentation (breast implants), Breast reduction, Rhinoplasty (nose reshaping), Face lift, Blepharoplasty (eyelid), Liposuction, Abdominoplasty (tummy tuck), and some non-surgical procedures like Botox, Fillers, and Laser Resurfacing procedures.

Many college students spend a considerable amount of money on cosmetic surgery to enhance their appearance, body image to give them a strong esthetic norm.

Unfortunately, most adolescent patients are unaware about all the risks caused by these procedures. There are no guarantees for any surgery, and like any other surgery cosmetic surgeries have different complications and risks such as: adverse reactions to anesthesia thus, all surgeries have risks and are associated with anesthesia [11]. Other risks include operation infections, organ damage through puncturing by needles or other medical instruments, bleeding, poor healing, blood clotting, wound fluid collection, numbness, swelling, scares and other complications. However, although techniques have improved significantly over the years, careful examinations of patients should be implied prior to these cosmetic surgeries, to avoid unexpected complications. Nowadays the awareness of cosmetic surgery has increased at a high level [12]. Cosmetic surgery is a very common procedure and seems to be natural for women; it also became acceptable for men, especially when being associated with the enhancement of their careers. For students of both genders, cosmetic surgery is performed to enhance sexual attractiveness [13]. Previous research showed, women are more likely to consider having cosmetic surgery than men [14][15], due to the low self-esteem and low ratings of their physical attractiveness, the consideration for cosmetic surgery was increased. The purpose of this study is to examine the attitude and level of awareness among students of different colleges towards cosmetic surgery and the risks taken behind these procedures.

## METHOD

Once ethical approval had been obtained, participants were approached in Health Science College at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) by various researchers experienced in this technique. Students were briefed about the nature, goals, and objectives of the study, and then, offered the opportunity to participate. They were assured that their data would remain completely anonymous. Once they had provided informed consent, they completed the three-page questionnaire, which took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Data were entered to and analyzed using SPSS V. (26).

## RESULTS

### Participants: Demographic Profile of the Participants

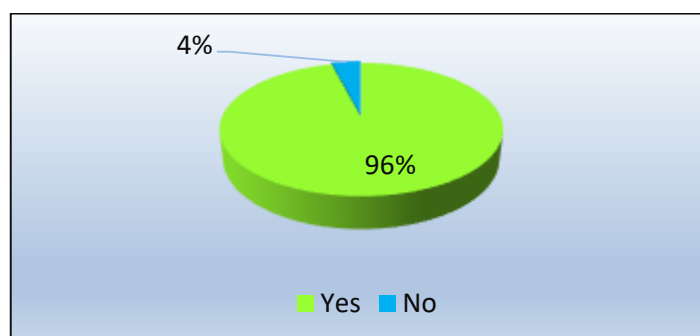
A total of 250 individuals participated in the present study. Up to 182 of them were females (72.8%) and 68 were males (27.2%). Majority of the participants ranging in age from 18 to 20 years, followed by 36.4% (n=91) ranging in age from 21 to 25 years. Most of the participants were Kuwaiti (71.6%, n=179), while other ethnic groups were non-Kuwaiti (28.4%, n=71). In terms of marital status, only 3.6% were Married, while the rest were Single (96.4%, n= 241). They rated their Cumulative Grade Point Average CGPA on a scale out of 4. One –third of them has less than 2 points (n=53, 33.8%), 27.4%, (n=43) were between 2.0 and 2.67 CGPA points, 21.0% (n=33) were between 2.68 and 3.33 CGPA points, and the rest (n=28, 17.8%) were above 3.33 points. The majority of participants were in the first year of college (n=142, 56.8%), followed by 25.6% (n=64) were in the second year of college.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the participants

Characteristic	Category	n	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Female	182	72.8%
	Male	68	27.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age</b>	18-20 years	153	61.2%
	21-25 years	91	36.4%
	Above 25 years	6	2.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Academic Year</b>	First	142	56.8%
	Second	64	25.6%
	Third	34	13.6%
	Forth	10	4.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>CGPA</b>	Less than 2 points	53	33.8%
	2.00-2.67 points	43	27.4%
	2.68-3.33 points	33	21.0%
	Above 3.33 points	28	17.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Nationality</b>	Kuwaiti	179	71.6%
	Non-Kuwaiti	71	28.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Marital status</b>	Married	9	3.6%
	Single	241	96%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Prevalence of Cosmetic Surgery among the students:**

Most of the participants in the study have ever heard about cosmetic surgery (n=240, 96%).

**Figure 1: Prevalence of Cosmetic Surgery among the students**

**Source of information:**

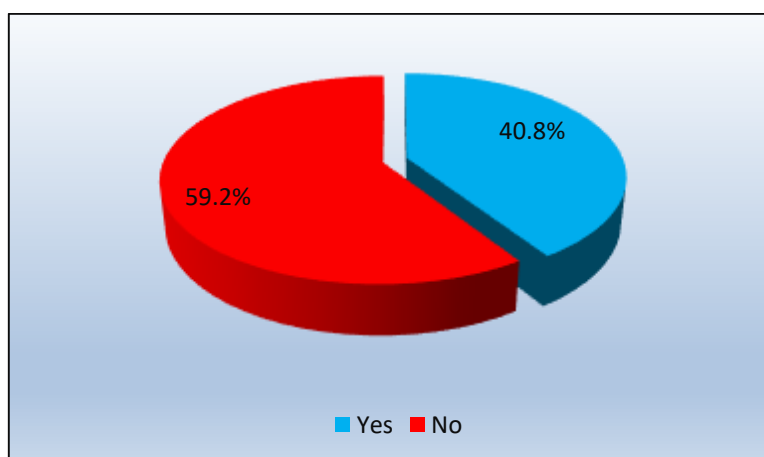
Table 2: Source of information about Cosmetic Surgery

Source of information	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Television	53	17.7%	21.9%
Friends	57	19.1%	23.6%
Medical consultation	21	7.0%	8.7%
Internet	168	56.2%	69.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

♦Multiple answers (responses) were possible.

Media exposure represents the mode of the respondents' selections, since it represents slightly less than three-quarters of the responses given to a question regarding sources of the information about Cosmetic Surgery (74.0%). Breakdown of the responses indicated that 69.4% (n=168) of the respondents selected internet and 21.9% (n=53) selected television. There were 57 (23.6%) have been informed by friends. Since we have 299 responses in this question and 240 respondents responded positively, so almost everyone did tick at least one option, which mean that each respondent had informed by one source.

With regard to the attitudes towards the reliability of Cosmetic Surgery information, closed to three-fifth of the respondents ( $n = 148, 59.2\%, CI: 53.0\% - 65.4\%$ ) indicated that they did not consider information obtained from these sources as a reliable information (see figure 2 below).



**Figure 2: Responses regarding reliability of Cosmetic Surgery information**

#### **Participants Experience with Cosmetic surgery:**

There were 232 respondents (92.8%) indicated that they had not any cosmetic surgery, while only 7.2% (n=18) of them responded positively regarding a question in the survey labeled "Have you had any cosmetic surgery". There were 18 responses obtained from those who experienced cosmetic surgery. Majority of them (61.5%) did Rhinoplasty

(included deviated septum). In addition, some of them did laser surgery (23.1%) and Botox (15.4%), and cosmetic surgery for hand burns (15.4%). The other cosmetic surgeries experienced by the respondents were Fillers, Nevus, and Tummy Tuck.

Among those who had not experienced Cosmetic surgery (n=232) there were 183 students (78.9%) indicated that they had no intention or considering having cosmetic surgery in the future, while 21.1% of them (n=49) responded positively. Among this group (i.e. those who said yes)

There were 29 (70.7%) of them have intention to operate Rhinoplasty cosmetic surgery, while the rest have intention to operate face-lift, Body craving, surgical orthodontics, and faciolplasty. It is worth to mention here that, 18 students did not have answer for this question.

### Awareness about types of cosmetic surgery:

Table 3: Responses regarding awareness about types of cosmetic surgery

Types of cosmetic surgery	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Breast augmentation (breast implants)	85	8.8%	36.5%
Breast reduction	62	6.4%	26.6%
Rhinoplasty (nose reshaping)	163	16.9%	70.0%
Face lift	100	10.4%	42.9%
Blepharoplasty (eyelid)	78	8.1%	33.5%
Liposuction	109	11.3%	42.9%
Abdominoplasty (tummy tuck)	90	9.3%	38.6%
Botox	55	5.7%	23.6%
Fillers	75	7.8%	32.2%
Laser Resurfacing	149	15.4%	63.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>100%</b>	

♦Multiple answers (responses) were possible.

Majority of the respondents (n=163, 70.0%) were aware of Rhinoplasty (nose reshaping), followed by 63.9% (n=149) sufficiently aware of Laser Resurfacing, 42.9% (n=109) of them were aware of Liposuction, and 42.9% (n=109) of them were aware of face-lift. Since we have 966 responses in this question and 240 respondents have ever heard about cosmetic surgery, so almost everyone did tick at least 4 options, which mean that each student aware of at least 4 types of cosmetic surgery.

### Family support in doing cosmetic surgery:

Most of the participants in the study (n=224, 90.4%) responded negatively to a question in the survey labeled “Do your family support you in doing cosmetic surgery”, while only 24 respondents (9.6%) stated that their families support them in doing cosmetic surgery.

**Level of awareness of any risks associated with cosmetic surgery:**

Table 4 below represents levels of awareness of any risks or side effects associated with cosmetic surgery. As shown in the below table, slightly greater than three-quarters of the surveyed students ( $n = 193, 77.2\%, CI: 71.9\% - 82.5\%$ ) were high level of awareness of any risks or side effects associated with cosmetic surgery. It is clear from the Table 4 that, slightly less than one-quarter of the students ( $n = 57, 22.8\%, CI: 17.5\% - 28.1\%$ ) were not sufficiently aware of the risks of cosmetic surgery to their health.

Table 4: Level of aware of any risks or side effects associated with cosmetic surgery

Level of awareness	n	Percent
High	193	77.2%
Low	57	22.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>

Furthermore, majority of the respondents ( $n=152, 78.4\%$ ) were aware of deformation of body parts as a risk associated with cosmetic surgery, followed by 34.0% ( $n=66$ ) sufficiently aware of infections associated with cosmetic surgery. Since we have 293 responses in this question and 193 respondents has a high level of awareness of cosmetic surgery, so almost everyone did tick at least 1.5 option, which mean that each student aware of at least 2 kinds of risks or side effects associated with cosmetic surgery (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Kinds of risks are the students aware of

Kinds of risks	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Cancer	32	10.9%	16.5%
Deformation of body parts	152	51.9%	78.4%
Infections	66	22.5%	34.0%
Death	43	14.7%	22.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100%</b>	

♦Multiple answers (responses) were possible.

**Knowledge of people who had undergone cosmetic surgery:**

In a question in the survey labeled “Did you know anyone who had undergone cosmetic surgery from the following people?” majority of the sample ( $n=116, 61.7\%$ ) reported that they have relatives who had undergone cosmetic surgery, while 42.0% ( $n=79$ ) of the respondents indicated that they have friends who had undergone cosmetic surgery (see Table 6 below).

Table 6: Closed people who had undergone cosmetic surgery

Responses	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Friends	79	35.3%	42.0%
Sister	18	8.0%	9.6%
Parents	8	3.6%	4.3%
Husband	3	1.3%	1.6%
Relatives	116	51.8%	61.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100%</b>	

♦Multiple answers (responses) were possible.

Table 7: Kinds of cosmetic surgery that closed people had undergone

Kinds of cosmetic surgery	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Rhinoplasty	49	33.1%	59.0%
Sleeve Gastrectomy	8	5.4%	9.6%
Liposuction	21	14.2%	25.3%
Breast augmentation	4	2.7%	4.8%
Lifting (Face, Eyelid, Tummy Tuck)	25	16.9%	30.1%
Fillers	10	6.8%	12.0%
Laser Resurfacing	15	10.1%	18.1%
Botox	10	6.8%	12.0%
Dental surgery	2	1.4%	2.4%
Other	4	2.7%	4.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Note: Multiple answers (responses) were possible.

As presented in the above table, the common surgical operations undergone by the closed people are Rhinoplasty (n=49, 59.0%), Lifting of Face, Eyelid, and Tummy Tuck (n=25, 30.1%), Liposuction (n=21, 25.3%), Laser Resurfacing (n=15, 18.1%), Fillers (10, 12.0%), and Botox (10, 12.0%).

### The reasons for having cosmetic surgery:

Table 8: The reasons stand behind for having cosmetic surgery

Reasons	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Improve appearance	220	68.5%	90.9%
Improve function	16	5.0%	6.6%
Helps to make friend	8	2.5%	3.3%
Boost confidence	55	17.1%	22.7%
Improve relation with opposite sex	22	6.9%	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Note: Multiple answers (responses) were possible.



As presented in the above table, most of the students (n=220, 90.9%) reported that the main reason for having cosmetic surgery is to improve appearance, while 55 of them (22.7%) indicated that Boost confidence is the one of the most impressive reasons for having cosmetic surgery. There were other reasons for having cosmetic surgery but not common as the two reasons mentioned before. These other reasons for doing cosmetic surgery were to improve relation with opposite sex, improve function, and helps to make friend.

Since we have 321 responses in this question and 240 respondents heard about cosmetic surgery, so almost everyone did tick at least 1.34 options, which means that each student knew and were aware of at least 2 reasons for having cosmetic surgery.

#### **Factor analysis for attitudes toward cosmetic surgery:**

The participants gave 10 questions reflecting their attitudes toward cosmetic surgery. A factor analysis with VARIMAX rotation was performed with aid of SPSS 26 on the 10-item attitude toward cosmetic surgery scale, and four factors emerged. These four factors were: Intrapersonal beliefs, Devaluation beliefs, Sociocultural constrains, and the degree of awareness. These four rotated factors accounted for 56.4% of the variance or change occurring attitudes towards cosmetic surgery of the surveyed participants, with the first factor accounting for 20.2% of this variance.

## **DISCUSSION**

Cosmetic surgery has become a growing request worldwide by both, females and males of different ages to reach a high premium of beauty, satisfaction, self-esteem and confidence. This study indicates that 82.5% had high level of awareness of any risks or side effects associated with cosmetic surgery. Many young female students between the ages of 18-20 were more popular and more interested in obtaining cosmetic surgery than the male students, although surgery has become more acceptable to both genders. This may be due to different factors, as women are subjected to social pressure (e.g., media) in maintaining certain standards of beauty than are men. [16][17], which explains college students' attitude toward cosmetic surgery, thus, gender and ethnic differences in body satisfaction are closely related to the cultural and social standards of beauty ideals. [18]. Adolescent girls are exposed continuously to images of idealized female models through the media and advertising [24, 25]. Female appearance in our societies is important nowadays, meaning it has become a central element to women's identity. [19][20]. Nevertheless, cosmetic surgery has become reasonably affordable, and more acceptable for appearance enhancement [21], changing the attitude of students in having these surgeries. The attitudes have changed tremendously in our society towards cosmetic surgery because of public's exposure to reality makeover shows; that lead to the increased popularity of cosmetic surgery, associated with little pain and risk, showing the viewers the idea that recovery time for the patient is minimal and only a few qualifications are required of the surgeons performing the procedures [22]. Although most cosmetic surgeries cause various degrees of risk to health [23], prospective patients should weigh potential side effects from such surgeries. In our study, students were well aware about cosmetic surgery, mostly though the media,



especially the (internet), the students were also aware of some risks taken in performing cosmetic surgery but were encouraged in performing these surgeries when seen results of some members of their families that had already performed surgery and had enhanced their appearance. Most of the students had Rhinoplasty, which is very common in our society, although, religion restricts cosmetic surgery only to the deformed and disfigured.

## CONCLUSION

College students have a positive attitude towards cosmetic surgery, for beautifying and enhancing their appearance, neglecting the risks of these surgeries on their health.

Media plays an important role for information especially the internet; also, friends have a great impact and apposite attitude towards cosmetic surgery.

## Recommendation

Further studies should be undertaken to investigate the attitude of a wider population beyond colleges and universities towards cosmetic surgery. Education and health knowledge is important for students in understanding the health risks of cosmetic surgery.

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## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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