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Plastic Pictures: The Prevalence of Cosmetic Surgery Among the Selfie Generation

At a time when social media has become a core part of communication in modern society, plastic surgery has become a common concern in many cases. With the advent of selfies or photographic self-portraits, usually taken with a mobile phone camera, many are looking for ways to remain photogenic. The unfiltered use of social media to seek acceptance from one's peers has become a concern for many individuals. The presence of what scholars term the Facebook facelift, or the tendency of young adults to pursue cosmetic surgical interventions, is a concern because of the heightened awareness of individual appearance in comparison with what the media portrays as the ideal shape, color, and size. Exploring these plastic pictures will highlight the impact that selfies have on the search for the perfect appearance online.

The increasing pressure to have a pleasing appearance has become a concern. Alkarzae et al. illustrated this, noting that the use of cosmetic enhancements results from increased anxiety about what people will say online (252). The idea is to minimize the pressure by creating room for bettering their presentation to the virtual world. The influence that social media exposure has on people is a concern that has captivated many scholars. These scholars seek to understand the decisions that are made to meet the underlying insecurities humans have regarding their appearances.

While some may be looking for ways of avoiding this route, cosmetic companies take advantage of it to advertise their products. Arab et al. argue that social media has become the

best way of spreading information regarding cosmetic professional providers, providing easier access to an industry previously seen as a preserve for a few (1). The challenge is that some products are not legit and cause untold damage to their clients, which goes unreported in many cases. The rise of these adverts creates an increasing desire to look perfect regardless of the cost this may have in one's life. The challenge is providing a platform that allows people to question the essence of these ads and create room for developing the best means of enhancing self-esteem among social media users. The search for an ideal appearance is only a futile strategy that keeps individuals yearning for a look they cannot attain without damaging their bodies.

Many people have higher expectations about their existence and subsequent appearance. The judgment that comes after every portrait is a concern for many. For instance, Abaalkhail et al. noted that nasal sizes appeared larger by 30% in many selfies, increasing demand for rhinoplasty (2). Such an action could seem harmless in many cases, but the expectations do not end with a procedure. Some individuals fall into depression, and others remain with higher rates of body dissatisfaction compared to those who do not undergo such procedures. The low self-esteem arising from this is a concern. The concerns raised after such procedures show that the idea of what perfect looks like differs from one person to the next. The problems arising from such expectations seem to be creating more challenges. Again, reliance on photographs to affirm personal appearances only creates more impetus for such procedures.

Since an average millennial takes at least 28,000 selfies annually, the impact these have is staggering. Rohrich noted that the use of Botox and dermal fillers has increased, with 64% of plastic surgeons noting an increased surge of people under 30 seeking facial cosmetic surgery or injectable treatments. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons noted that Botox procedures rose by 28% since 2010, and dermal fillers by 32% within the same period for individuals

between 20 and 29 (Rohrich 1). Such statistics show the race towards delaying aging, searching for ideal figures and appearances, and a need to please the internet to minimize incidences of shame.

In reality, one cannot correct low self-esteem with a change in their physical appearance. At a time when exploring these outcomes could impact how people perceive their ideals, the challenge rests on developing a society that is dependent on cameras to determine who they are. While this is easy to say, the actions people take have a detrimental effect on them. The rise of such a generation only harms them rather than improves how they perceive their identity afterward.

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