



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS*

Breast Reconstruction Patients Undergo Cosmetic Surgery to Further Improve Body Image, ASPS Study Finds

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ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill. – Although breast reconstruction can dramatically improve a woman's self-esteem and sense of well-being following mastectomy, it may not be the only step some patients are taking to improve their self-image. A new study being presented at [Plastic Surgery The Meeting](#), the annual scientific meeting of the [American Society of Plastic Surgeons](#) (ASPS), Oct. 11-15, in San Diego, found that some breast cancer patients may choose to have cosmetic procedures, such as liposuction or eyelid surgery, in a quest to further improve their overall body image following breast reconstruction.

"Breast reconstruction is transformative in many ways. When a woman faces the prospect of losing a breast, one of the most gratifying things plastic surgeons can offer is the ability to help reconstruct the breast and possibly improve her appearance and restore her self confidence," said Liza Wu, MD, ASPS member surgeon and study co-author. "Despite the advances in the ability of plastic surgeons to recreate the breast, women may remain concerned about their body image. Some patients view cosmetic surgery as an additional option to further restore themselves and feel whole after battling breast cancer."

In the study, 1,214 patients had breast reconstruction between 2005 and 2012. Of those, 113 patients had cosmetic surgery following reconstruction and were given a questionnaire to assess the influences and impact of breast reconstruction and cosmetic procedures. Forty-two patients responded to the survey. Fifty-two cosmetic procedures were performed in survey respondents, including liposuction (33 percent), facelift (19 percent), and eyelid surgery (12 percent).

The most common reason cited for pursuing cosmetic surgery was the desire to improve self-image (62 percent), with some patients feeling more self-conscious about their appearance following reconstruction. While body image satisfaction was significantly higher following cosmetic surgery in the majority of patients, 28 percent of patients experienced no improvement in body image.

Interestingly, improvements in body image following cosmetic surgery were more likely to occur in patients who experienced an improvement in body image following breast reconstruction and/or were interested in cosmetic surgery prior to reconstruction.

"It is important to note that many women who opt for breast reconstruction do not go on to have cosmetic procedures," said Dr. Wu. "But for those that deem it an appropriate choice, cosmetic surgery can improve body image satisfaction and may help to further meet their needs and expectations."

The study, "Does Breast Reconstruction Impact the Decision of Patients to Pursue Cosmetic Surgery?" is being presented Sunday, Oct. 13, at 10:25 a.m. at the San Diego Convention Center.

Reporters can [register](#) to attend Plastic Surgery The Meeting, or arrange interviews with presenters, by contacting ASPS Public Relations at (847) 228-9900, media@plasticsurgery.org or in San Diego, Oct. 11-15, at (619) 525-6330.

About ASPS

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) is the world's largest organization of board-certified plastic surgeons. Representing more than 7,000 Member Surgeons, the Society is recognized as a leading authority and information source on aesthetic and reconstructive plastic surgery. ASPS comprises more than 94 percent of all board-certified plastic surgeons in the United States. Founded in 1931, the Society represents physicians certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. ASPS advances quality care to plastic surgery patients by encouraging high standards of training, ethics, physician practice and research in plastic surgery. You can learn more and visit the American Society of Plastic Surgeons at [PlasticSurgery.org](#) or [Facebook.com/PlasticSurgeryASPS](#) and [Twitter.com/ASPS_News](#).

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