

Brachioplasty: Association of Concomitant Procedures with Complication Rate

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Abstract

Background: Upper arm deformities following massive weight loss have lead to an increased demand in aesthetic contouring procedures such as brachioplasty. The authors performed a review of all patients who underwent a brachioplasty procedure in a multi-practice medical center, evaluating complication and revision rates, as well as the safety and efficacy of liposuction and co-procedures performed at the time of brachioplasty.

Methods: All patients who underwent a brachioplasty procedure from a multi-practice medical center were reviewed. Outcomes measured included patient demographics, operative interventions, and post-operative course.

Results: Ninety-eight patients 50.4±11.9 years of age (mean±SD) were analyzed. The etiology of upper arm deformities included massive weight loss from previous bariatric procedures (49.0 %) and diet and exercise (30.6%), in addition to senile elastosis (19.4%). Fifty-five patients (43.9%) underwent a concomitant procedure, with 53.6% undergoing arm liposuction at the time of brachioplasty. The total complication rate was 49% with major and minor complications rates of 18.4% and 40.8% respectively. Common complications included hypertrophic scarring (22.4%) and infection (13.3%). The total revision rate was 24.5%, with residual contour deformity (10.2%) and hypertrophic scarring (9.2%) representing the most common cause for revision. Patients who underwent a previous bariatric procedure or a co-procedure were at an increased risk of developing a major complication ($p = 0.033$ and $p = 0.04$ respectively). Concomitant upper arm liposuction was shown not to increase complications ($p = 0.388$).

Conclusions: Brachioplasty, despite being an effective treatment for contour irregularities of the upper arm, is associated with significant revision and complication rates. Post-bariatric patients should be informed of the potential for increased complications and should be nutritionally optimized prior to surgery. Additional procedures increase complications, strengthening the argument for staging patients who desire multiple procedures. Liposuction of the upper arm can safely increase the ability to contour the upper arm.