

## Body-Contouring Following Bariatric Surgery: How Much is Being Done?

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### Abstract

**Background:** Over 220,000 bariatric procedures are performed in the United States annually (1). The massive weight loss that typically ensues can leave patients with large amounts of excess skin, poor cosmesis, and as a result, a worsened quality of life (2, 3). Despite the frequency with which weight-reduction surgeries are performed, the proportion of post-bariatric surgery patients who undergo subsequent body-contouring procedures is unknown (4, 5). We therefore designed a study to explore demographic features and patient education regarding body contouring procedures in the bariatric surgery population.

**Methods:** A survey was mailed to 1,158 patients who underwent bariatric surgery by two surgeons between 2003 and 2011. Attempts were made to contact non-responders via telephone.

**Results:** Two hundred eighty-four patients responded (24.5%). One hundred fifty-six respondents (54.9%) completed a college education. Over one-third of all respondents reported an annual household income <\$50,000. Insurance covered 97.2% of bariatric procedures. Seventy-two (25.4%) report discussing body contouring surgery with their bariatric surgeon perioperatively (Figure 1). Forty (14.1%) were referred for plastic surgery consultation (Figure 2). Thirty-three (11.6%) underwent body contouring procedures. The most frequent reasons cited for not undergoing body contouring were expense (29.2%) and lack of awareness regarding options (23.6%). Thirty-nine percent reported they might have chosen differently had they received more information.

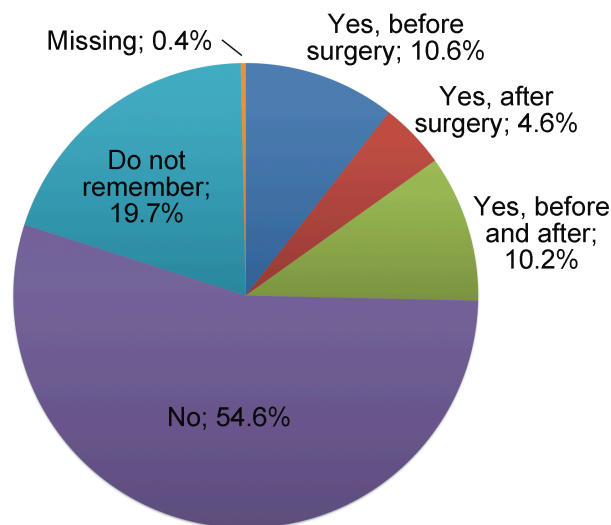


Figure 1: Response to whether bariatric surgeons discussed body contouring.

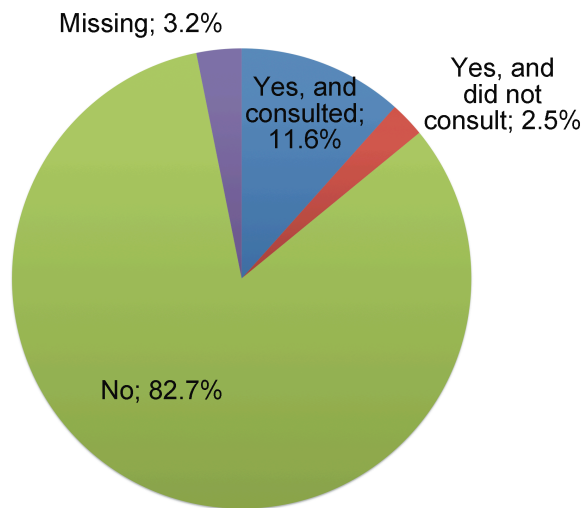


Figure 2: Response to whether bariatric surgeons referred respondents to plastic surgeons.

**Conclusions:** As a result of insufficient pre- and post-operative counseling, the majority of bariatric surgery patients are unaware of the multitude of body-contouring procedures available. Furthermore, a large subset of these patients demonstrates an interest in further pursuing such options but are unable to afford them. Additional efforts towards improving patient (and surgeon) education regarding post-bariatric body-contouring options are warranted.

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