

Abstract - Breast reduction is the most common plastic surgical procedure performed at our institution. As such, we initiated a class 12 years ago to educate our patients prior to surgical consultation. It has proved a valuable tool for patient self-selection, efficiency of consultation, and improvements in overall patient satisfaction.

Materials and Methods - A didactic education class was developed in order to inform the prospective breast reduction patient of the indications, details of operative procedures, postoperative care and restrictions, risks, and benefits. Prior to attending class, patients are screened for smoking and BMI criteria, and may not attend unless smoke free and BMI<34. The class is comprised of a 45-minute didactic lecture given by a physicians' assistant or nurse with a 15-minute question and answer period after which patients complete a written survey. Only after attending this class may a patient sign up for individual consultation with a surgeon.

Results - Over 3000 patients have attended breast reduction class. We have found that 80% of attendees go forward with their consultation, and that 100% proceed thereafter to surgery. We have reduced the time spent by the surgeon in consultation time by 50%. Patient surveys demonstrated consistently high ratings for understanding of procedure. It has standardized surgical aftercare among our surgeons and nursing staff, which has increased the efficiency of our process. It has improved compliance with restrictions post-op and improved patient outcomes and satisfaction.

Conclusion - A pre-consultation breast reduction education class is a valuable tool in helping to manage the plastic surgery needs of a large insured population. An online version of the class could be an additional method of increasing patient access to this tool.