



Plastic surgery and celebrity behavior change: Hiding and revealing

A cirurgia plástica e a mudança de comportamento de celebridades: Ocultando e desvelando

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■ ABSTRACT

Introduction: The recent Resolution of the Federal Council of Medicine (CFM) No. 2,336/23, which allows for broader dissemination of medical services, sheds light on the relationship between Plastic Surgery and the media. This, in addition to body dissatisfaction and sociocultural issues, is a factor that contributes to women representing 86.3% of recipients of procedures in this specialty worldwide. The objective is to develop a reference panel of real situations of how female celebrities publicly address their plastic surgeries in the media. **Method:** A qualitative study of the Descriptive-Analytical Essay type was carried out with online data collection. Publications from three nations, Brazil, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, from websites, magazines, newspapers, and social media materials were used. **Results:** The construction of an evolutionary reference panel consisting of real situations reveals the sequence of two main phases: concealment and unveiling. In the first, female celebrities denied that their changes in physical appearance were the result of surgical interventions, as in the emblematic cases of actresses Marilyn Monroe and Jennifer Laurence and television star Kim Kardashian. Regarding the revelation, especially in Brazil, famous personalities began to treat their plastic surgeries with greater transparency, such as singer Anitta and TV presenter Xuxa. On social networks, it became common to find users documenting their own experiences with procedures in this specialty. **Conclusion:** Plastic surgery probably gained a greater presence in the media with the popularization of cosmetic surgery, a process in which the acceptance of celebrities and the publicity of procedures are significant.

Keywords: Surgery, plastic, Social media; Famous persons; News; Plastic surgery procedures.

■ RESUMO

Introdução: A recente Resolução do Conselho Federal de Medicina (CFM) n° 2.336/23, que permite divulgação mais ampla dos serviços médicos, joga luz sobre a relação da Cirurgia Plástica com a esfera midiática. Esta, além da insatisfação com o corpo e questões socioculturais, é fator que contribui para que mulheres representem 86,3% dos recipiendários dos procedimentos da especialidade mundialmente. Objetiva-se elaborar painel referencial de situações reais do modo como celebridades femininas abordam suas cirurgias plásticas publicamente na mídia. **Método:** Procede-se estudo qualitativo do tipo Ensaio Descritivo-Analítico com coleta de dados *online*. Utilizaram-se publicações provenientes de três nações, Brasil, Reino Unido e Estados Unidos da América, veiculadas em sites, revistas, jornais, além de materiais de redes sociais. **Resultados:** A construção de painel evolutivo referencial constituído por situações reais revela a sequência de duas principais fases: o ocultamento e o desvelar. Na primeira, celebridades femininas negavam que suas alterações de aparência física eram fruto de intervenções cirúrgicas, como nos emblemáticos casos das atrizes Marilyn Monroe e Jennifer Laurence e da estrela da televisão Kim

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Kardashian. Acerca do desvelamento, sobretudo no Brasil, personalidades famosas começaram a tratar suas cirurgias plásticas com maior transparência, tais quais a cantora Anitta e a apresentadora Xuxa. Em redes sociais tornou-se encontrada a presença de usuários documentando a própria experiência com procedimentos da especialidade. **Conclusão:** A cirurgia plástica provavelmente ganhou maior presença na mídia com a popularização da cirurgia estética, processo este em que a aceitação das celebridades e a publicização de procedimentos mostram-se significativas.

Descritores: Cirurgia plástica; Mídias sociais; Pessoas famosas; Notícias; Procedimentos de cirurgia plástica.

INTRODUCTION

The change in medical advertising regulations, notably represented by the recent CFM Resolution No. 2,336/23¹, signals a substantial transformation in the panorama of medical practice, particularly in the field of plastic surgery (PS). This review by the Federal Council of Medicine now allows for broader dissemination of medical services, such as the results of surgical interventions, for which cosmetic surgery is increasingly present in the media. Thus, this event sheds light and challenges a deeper understanding of the relationship between the specialty and the press.

In fact, in an article published in the *Revista Brasileira de Cirurgia Plástica*, Coelho et al.² point out that, in addition to recognizing body dissatisfaction and sociocultural influence as the most evident factors that lead women to plastic surgery, the media is also an element present in decisions of this nature. Since the authors' work evaluates this phenomenon in female patients who are not celebrities, it can be inferred that, in those who are, the influence of the media may be even more active.

Thus, speculations about interventions on famous people and reports of experiences are often topics in magazines, newspapers, and social networks. However, despite such development and scope, apparently, little has been investigated about the conduct of this group in relation to PSs. In a context in which the boundaries between the clinical sphere and public exposure are becoming increasingly permeable, the way in which the popularization of plastic surgery is possibly related to the acceptance of celebrities and the non-confidentiality of procedures highlights the behavior of public figures in shaping social perceptions about the specialty.

Given that women represent 86.3% of all recipients of cosmetic surgical procedures worldwide³, the search for a panel on how female celebrities behave regarding whether or not they make their cosmetic plastic surgeries public seems legitimate.

OBJECTIVE

Therefore, the objective is to contribute to the development of a reference panel consisting of real situations of how female celebrities publicly approach their plastic surgeries in the media.

METHOD

This is a qualitative study with secondary data of the Descriptive-Analytical Essay type. Data collection was carried out online, considering sources in Portuguese and English. Relevant publications from three different nations were found, namely six from Brazil, three from the United Kingdom, and one from the United States of America. In addition, texts written on websites, magazines, and newspapers, as well as long and short videos from social networks, were used.

RESULTS

Hiding

During Hollywood's "golden age" in the 1960s, there were ten rules that movie stars were required to follow, including changing their appearance, often through PSs. Such changes were the subject of speculation, as celebrities at the time were not likely to speak openly about the topic.

Celebrities, especially female ones, denied that their changes in physical appearance, when comparing before and after fame, were the result of surgical interventions. A representative example of this concealment is that of actress Marilyn Monroe, who never confirmed having undergone PSs. However, 51 years after her death, X-rays confirmed that she had undergone a chin graft, a fracture in the nasal bone, and silicone injections in her breasts (a precursor to today's breast implants)⁵.

With the beginning of the new century, it is clear that the public remained with the idea that famous people who appeared on television, in magazines,

and recently on the Internet were naturally beautiful. Renowned personalities of the 21st century are still reluctant to publicly admit their plastic surgeries despite having notable transformations in their physical appearance after becoming famous.

Another notable example of this phenomenon is the Swiss media personality Jocelyn Wildenstein, 82, called “cat woman” for her changing appearance; the celebrity denies having undergone any procedure, even though her appearance reveals typical characteristics of successive surgical interventions⁶.

Also, the American reality TV star Kim Kardashian, 42, is another example of this concealment. In the 2010s, the influencer was reported by the media for undergoing buttock augmentation with the “Brazilian Butt Lift” (BBL); in 2023, there was speculation about the reversal of the BBL through liposuction⁷. Another case that gained notoriety in the media was that of the actress Jennifer Lawrence, 32, who was also the target of speculation. After changes in her appearance and being named one of the most beautiful people in the world by People Magazine in 2011, she confirmed, in 2012, the rumors about a rhinoplasty that had previously been hidden in the past⁸.

Unveiling

Unlike celebrities such as television personalities and actresses, some openly expose their surgical procedures. In this sense, the singer Anitta, in 2013, decided to reveal her first rhinoplasty when receiving the Best of the Year award on the Domingão do Faustão program on Rede Globo, wearing a bandage on her nose⁹. In this episode, since PS was still a subject that was not usually discussed so openly, by not hiding the recovery process, the program’s audience reacted negatively¹⁰. The artist seemed not to care about the criticism and maintained her position of not hiding her aesthetic interventions.

In Brazil, other famous personalities have also begun to address the issue with greater transparency, such as presenter Xuxa Meneghel, 60 years old, who shared her experiences with mammoplasty: the first in 2000, with a 230ml implant, and the second in 2016, with a reduction to 140ml implants¹¹.

Furthermore, the concept of celebrity, in the past, was limited to people known for occupying prominent positions, such as in movies, television programs, soap operas, and plays. In contemporary times, with the relevance of social networks, it is clear that famous personalities have emerged from the virtual world, such as digital influencers.

It has become common for patients to post videos on YouTube documenting their own experiences with

plastic surgery. Makeup artist Mari Maria, 30, whose channel has 10.5 million subscribers, created a series on the platform describing the pre- and post-surgery processes of her rhinoplasty, which has 2.6 million views on the video showing the day of the surgery¹². The images from 2018 were shared with the public the footage immediately after the procedure, with the influencer still weak.

In this sense of greater popularization and freedom of reporting, there is a similar movement among TikTok users. Profiles with much engagement publish short videos describing their experiences and answering followers’ questions about it. Influencer Dylan Mulvaney, with 10.6 million followers on the social network, narrated her process of gender affirmation for the female sex, explaining how her successive surgeries, such as rhinoplasty, mentoplasty, and frontoplasty, occurred. In a 2022 post with 17.5 million viewers, for example, the influencer shows a conversation with her plastic surgeon about facial feminization surgery¹³.

DISCUSSION

Consistent evidence indicates that in the past, Plastic Surgery was limited to contributing to the recovery of patients’ quality of life through reconstructive procedures, with a change in the specialty’s direction being observed over the years. In this sense, the 2018 Census of the Brazilian Society of Plastic Surgery¹⁴ shows the predominance of aesthetic interventions in relation to reconstructive ones, given that, in the period from 2009 to 2018, aesthetic surgery exceeded the number of reconstructive procedures in 2018 in Brazil by 359,029.

Furthermore, with regard to the growth of the specialty, an increase of 177.1% was reported in these ten years of analysis, with an initial 629,000 procedures in 2009 and 1,742,861 in 2018¹⁴. Thus, plastic surgery grew as a specialty with the popularization of aesthetic interventions, a process possibly influenced by the change in the behavior of celebrities in revealing their surgeries publicly.

Lima et al.¹⁵, in a study published in this journal, highlight that, in fact, the concept of PS conveyed in the media is directly associated with aesthetic gains. The authors concluded that of the 1,983 news articles that addressed CPs analyzed in the Brazilian press, 68.94% were classified with a focus on aesthetics, while 21.33% were in the restorative area.

Furthermore, from concealment to revelation, it is observed that, nowadays, many celebrities openly expose their procedures. This observed change in behavior can promote the affirmation of plastic surgery

since it contributes to demystifying and popularizing the procedures. Likewise, it is possible to infer that, as they began to report their aesthetic procedures, PS gained more presence in the media.

Finally, with regard to the limitations of the work, it seems that contrary to what has been gathered here, a lack of scientific studies can be identified that relate plastic surgery to patients exposed to the media. In databases such as SciELO, PubMed, and LILACS, the only article on this discussion was found, the one already mentioned by Lima et al.¹⁵ Thus, this scarcity points to the need for more studies on the subject to be produced, which would broaden this current exploration.

CONCLUSION

It can, therefore, be stated that three important changes have been recorded that seem to be interconnected. The first concerns the popularization of cosmetic surgery. There has also been a change in the behavior of famous people regarding their plastic surgeries, from concealment to disclosure. It is important to note that the reporting of such a change was associated with the greater presence of plastic surgery in the media, contributing to the promotion of the specialty.

COLLABORATIONS

- LMC** Analysis and/or data interpretation, Conception and design study, Conceptualization, Final manuscript approval, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing - Original Draft Preparation, Writing - Review & Editing.
- IWM** Conception and design study, Conceptualization, Final manuscript approval, Investigation, Writing - Original Draft Preparation, Writing - Review & Editing.
- AG** Analysis and/or data interpretation, Conception and design study, Formal Analysis, Supervision, Writing - Review & Editing.

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