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The psychology behind drastic transformation surgeries and the surgical fraud

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ABSTRACT

Medical advancements in the 21st century have enabled people to do things that were once beyond our imagination. Medical science today is not only limited to curing diseases but it also includes cochlear implants, eye implants, organ donation/transfer etc. It was in the 1960s that the ASPS (American Society of Plastic Surgeons) found a new substance called silicone to treat skin imperfections. The experiment escalated to a point that the MD of Houston, Thomas Cronin discovered that the same element could be used in breast implants. Since then, there have been around 15.7 million minimally invasive cosmetic procedures and about 1.8 million cosmetic surgical procedures that include breast augmentation, liposuction, nose reshaping, eyelid surgeries and tummy tuck (statistics provided by ASPS). However, apart from the people who indulge in such types of surgeries to fix their imperfections, there are also a group of people who have undergone unnecessary and harsh surgeries in order to express their thoughts or to look like a cartoon character they fantasized in their childhood. The Barbie or the cartoon characters were created to imitate humans, but in the present scenario, people have the mindset to imitate cartoons and dolls. Makeup was not enough to hide bodily imperfections which is why some people resorted to solving them with surgeries, 'the permanent solution'. This paper looks into the cases of Pixee Fox, Valeria Lukyanova and Vinny Ohh particularly, who have undergone drastic surgeries to look animated. Even though the far-reaching possibilities of medical science has been proved through these patients (victims), it cannot be denied that such unnecessary surgeries need to be stopped because it is harmful and has resulted to side effects and deaths.

Keywords— *Implants, Surgeries, Imperfections, Barbie*

1. MOTIVE

The objective of the paper is to analyse the psyche of the patients who undergo drastic transformations unnecessarily in order to conform to the beauty standards and proposing ways to do away with the surgical fraud that is taking place in the name of implants and modification of the body.

2. THESIS STATEMENT

Surgeries that are harsh on the body and does not necessarily require the patient to undergo, has to be lawfully stopped as these surgeries not only result to the ultimate death of the patients but also is a crime on the part of the surgeon to remove organs from a patient's body unless it is critical. The urge of the patients behind converting their bodies in an unnatural manner should be analyzed and treated accordingly.

3. PATIENT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Texan Timmie

Texan was the first woman with breast implants which happened in the year 1962. In her interview with the Daily Mail, she said that the "surgery was definitely painful but the pain has not gone away till now". Ten years after the operation, Timmie Jean's breasts began to harden, she began to experience shooting pains and then "hurting everywhere." Now, 45 years after her operation, Timmie Jean is afraid to have her implants removed, even though one of them has a small tear in the shell and she experiences pains in her chest that can last for weeks and feel like she has broken a rib.

3.2 Pixel Fox

Aged 25, the patient has undergone more than 200 surgeries which includes modifying her whole body to look like 'Tinkerbell' and other Disney characters. She has undergone a surgery allowing her to remove 6 ribs from her body making her waist as tiny as 14 inches. Initially, she could not find a surgeon to perform surgery like that, but recently Dr Barry Eppley agreed to take up her case and follow up with the procedures. Dr Barry in his interview with the Barcoff TV agreed that the procedures of rib removal is

extremely painful and has the tendency to leave the patient in pain for the rest of their lives. "People often come up to me and say, "Don't take this the wrong way, but you look like a cartoon". Pixee says. "But for me, that's a compliment, that's what I want to achieve". She cites her inspirations as Jessica Rabbit, Aurora from Sleeping Beauty and Holli Would from Cool World.

3.3 Valeria Lukyanova

Aged 33, Valeria has done breast implants and other cosmetic surgeries to look like a Barbie doll. She is known as the human Barbie after her transformation. However, there isn't much information about her doctors and the exact surgeries that she underwent as she denies to have undergone any operations and claims to have a natural body.

3.4 Vinny Ohh

Vinny, aged 23, has undergone multiple surgeries to look like some gender-less alien. He wants his genitals removed as he feels that he is neither a male nor a female. Doctors fear that he might not be able to urinate or there might be germ build up after the procedure. Renowned plastic surgery Dr Simoni, said: "The experimental nature of the procedure means it is highly risky and it could also impact on basic bodily functions such as Vinny's ability to urinate."

4. THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND TRANSFORMATION SURGERIES

The problem lies in the beauty standards that have been set since the Elizabethan Age. It was during this time that women started to wear corsets to give people the illusion of having a tiny waist, and an hourglass-shaped figure which was considered beautiful by the 16th-century people. Wearing these corsets was painful and hardly gave women the space to breathe. Since then, an hourglass figure, tiny waists, huge breasts and fair skin is what women have been trying to achieve in order to look "beautiful and attractive". Also, girls grow up playing with Barbie dolls and watching fairy tales that portray reserved women and women with fair skin, and tiny waist as beautiful. The beautiful is related to goodness, while ugliness with evil. For example, none of the Disney princesses such as the Snow White or the Little Mermaid is obese.

Another element that cannot be ignored, which also gives heed to such illogical beauty standards is the mass media. Most of the time, people like Vinny Ohh and Pixie Fox are all over the internet after their drastic transformation and surgeries. Although the media houses do not take a particular side on these issues, their constant coverage of such news always has the tendency to influence young minds. Now the question is, with what thought or psyche do some people such as Vinny Ohh take such drastic decisions for themselves?

4.1 Body dysmorphic disorder

Mary Pritchard, a body image expert at Boise State University stated that the people who undergo such drastic surgeries unnecessarily might have a disorder called 'The Body Dysmorphic Disorder' in which a person cannot stop thinking about his/her perceived defects or flaws in their appearance. "Those with the disorder don't see themselves the way everyone else sees them", she explains. "When you have body dysmorphic disorder, you intensely obsess over your appearance and body image, repeatedly checking the mirror, grooming or seeking reassurance, sometimes for many hours each day. Your perceived flaw and the repetitive behaviours cause you significant distress and impact your ability to function in your daily life" (Mayo Clinic 2012). She added that such disorders cannot be cured as it starts in the early teenage years. However, it can be controlled to some extent with psychological and psychiatric help.

5. SURGICAL FRAUD

Unnecessary surgeries as mentioned above need to be done away with as these surgeries are only a way for the surgeons to earn a lot of money. According to the rules, a surgeon is supposed to inform the patient about the after or the side effects of the surgery before conducting it. But there are some reports of the surgeon giving insufficient information regarding the surgery in order to make money. In the paper "Should unnecessary harmful non therapeutic cosmetic surgery be criminalized?" author Dennis J. Baker wrote "Bryson told Bass (a physician) that he was going to cut off his fingers to try to obtain insurance money. The physician refused to amputate Bryson's fingers but accepted payment to inject his fingers with procaine so that he would not feel pain when the attempt was made to cut off his fingers. Bass also gave Bryson a rubber tourniquet to stop the likely bleeding and showed him how to apply and use it. Thereafter, a third party, Tryson, at Bryson's request, used an electric saw to cut off four fingers. Moore, J., took the view that Bass was criminally liable as an accessory to the maiming because he assisted the perpetrator and instigator of the maiming. It also was held that consent provided no defence, because of the level of harm inflicted." (Baker, 2014, 7/45) This shows how self-harm is a crime in itself but also assigning the other person in hurting them, is also wrong. Furthermore, it is the doctor's duty to take good care of the patients and not tear their organs apart or fill them with plastics and silicon as each of our organs are made to function in a particular way to keep us healthy and alive. Removal of organs can be fatal or have physical and psychological effects. Minor adults are the common victims of such operations, as they are immature and usually attempt to modify themselves to seek attention from people. No matter how tested or "safe" these surgeries are considered to be, the statistics of people having pain or other effects will never go down. Diana M Zuckerman briefly stated the ill effects of breast implants in her paper "Reasonably safe? Breast implants and informed consent". She elaborated "The most common complication of breast implants is capsular contracture, the tightening or hardening of the scar tissue surrounding the implant, which usually causes the breast to feel unnaturally firm, and may eventually result in breasts that are hard and very painful. Capsular contracture can occur almost immediately after getting implants, or, more likely, years later" (Zuckerman, 2010,3/20). Breast implants can also have adverse effects on breastfeeding or even rearing a child, which is another reason why unnecessary transformation surgeries must be stopped. Mary Pritchard suggested that the doctors and surgeons must refrain from conducting surgeries on such patients as the risks of the possible side effects fall directly on the surgeon who conducted the surgery. The patients having Body Dysmorphic Disorder need psychiatric help because even if the desired surgeries are performed, the patient with such a disorder will never be satisfied with how they look even after the surgery. The same is quite evident in

Pixee Fox's statement after the rib removal that there are more drastic transformations to come, and changing her body is something that she is most passionate about. "This is like my job this is what I do and I'm going to keep on sculpting"

6. CONCLUSION

It is true that there have been a lot of advancements in the field of medical science, but the doctors and the surgeons must not forget their actual duties and must not do things that they are forbidden to do, that is, playing with the patient's body, even if the patient gives his/consent to do so. A patient who needs psychiatric help must be sent to a psychiatrist and must not be treated by anybody else. The medical resources are scarce and should be used on the people who are actually ill and not on people who only intend to feed on their fantasies. Laws must be made to protect the health and lives of minor adults who are more vulnerable to plastic surgeries in order to conform to artificial beauty standards.

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