

Blepharoplasty: The threshold between aesthetics, satisfaction and possible complications



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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Blepharoplasty is a plastic surgery that aims to remove excess skin and fat from the lower and/or upper eyelid conjunctivae. This surgery is performed in the operating room by a plastic surgeon or ophthalmologist and has an average duration of about 90 to 120 minutes. Thus, because it is a relatively simple procedure, the rate of patients interested in this type of surgery is increasing. This surgical intervention, in addition to bringing aesthetic satisfaction to the patient, who has his self-esteem increased after disconnecting from the tired and sad look, can also improve the range and visual comfort, since the excess skin and fat in the eyelid conjunctiva can project over the eyeball and disfigure vision. However, even though there are many benefits, surgery can lead to complications. **OBJECTIVE:** This study aims to analyze the relationship between patient satisfaction and complications associated with blepharoplasty. **METHOD:** To compose this integrative literature review, articles obtained from searches in virtual databases (PubMed, SciELO, Virtual Health Library and Google Scholar) were used, using the Science and Health Descriptors (DeCS) "Plastic Surgery", "Techniques" and "Eyelid Conjunctiva", between the years 2011 and 2023. **RESULTS:** Blepharoplasty showed more benefits than harms. Even so, the need for precise indication, care, study and excessive attention during the choice and execution of the technique is notorious, since there are complications such as edema, hematoma and retraction of the lower eyelid with ectropion. Patient satisfaction is evidenced in the vast majority of blepharoplasty cases, since there is a considerable



improvement in aesthetics, which is often accompanied by functional visual benefits. The tired and aged look gives way to facial rejuvenation and increased self-esteem. In addition, the choice of the medical professional and the surgical technique are extremely important, since each patient has a specificity, from the amount of skin and fat to be removed to the texture and elasticity of the site. Another decisive factor for a good aesthetic result is the rest and home care of the patient undergoing surgery. It is necessary to use sunscreens, medications, ice and a commitment to medical return for professional evaluation. In this way,

patient safety is placed in a prominent place, aesthetic satisfaction is achieved, and surgical complications are reduced. **CONCLUSION:** Thus, it is possible to conclude that despite the existence of surgical complications, patient safety is a priority in operating rooms and patient satisfaction can be achieved without putting their lives at risk. In addition, with the increase in blepharoplasty, nowadays, the techniques are increasingly efficient and the professionals are more specialized.

Keywords: Plastic Surgery, Eyelid Conjunctiva, Techniques.

1 INTRODUCTION

Plastic Surgery is defined as a surgical specialty in charge of reconstructing, remodeling, and/or altering body structures that present both changes in their function and structure, according to the Brazilian Society of Plastic Surgery, 2022 (SBCP). In this sense, the expansion of this branch is evident both in its aesthetic and restorative performance, always taking into account the benefits beyond the harms and also the patient's satisfaction in the highest degree of importance. Therefore, there is a range of procedures within plastic surgery that have this purpose, such as blepharoplasty.

Blepharoplasty is a cosmetic surgical procedure that aims to improve the appearance of the upper eyelids, lower eyelids, or both. This surgery is commonly performed to treat problems such as excess skin, fat bags, or sagging around the eyes, which can result in an aged, tired, or sad appearance. The goal of blepharoplasty is to restore a more youthful and revitalized appearance. As it is a surgical procedure, it is important to emphasize the need to evaluate the risks and benefits, explaining to the patient the steps of the surgery and the possible complications (FRANCO et al., 2010), (PATROCINIO et al., 2011).

The eyes play a crucial role in the aesthetics of the human body, influencing the overall perception of health, vitality, and youth. The ocular region not only reflects emotional and personality aspects, but is also remarkably susceptible to the changes associated with aging and, in addition, is directly linked to self-esteem (MOELLEKEN, 2000).

Therefore, when considering procedures such as blepharoplasty, it is essential to take into account not only the physical aspects, but also the psychological state and expectations of the patient. Careful understanding of what satisfies and dissatisfies each individual is crucial for a personalized and successful surgical approach (DIAS; BORBA, 2021).

In addition to aesthetics, blepharoplasty can be performed in people with limited vision due to excessive sagging of the upper eyelids that interfere with the visual field. This happens when excess skin from the eyelid protrudes over the eye area, causing visual obstruction. This can result in reduced



vision, especially in the upper field of the visual field. Functional blepharoplasty, in these cases, seeks to correct this problem. As it is a surgical procedure, it is important to emphasize the need to evaluate the risks and benefits, explaining to the patient the steps of the surgery and the possible complications (FRANCO et al., 2010), (PATROCINIO et al., 2011).

However, it is worth mentioning some risks with regard to blepharoplasty, which compromises both the patient's satisfaction and their quality of life directly or indirectly. Among some possible complications, there is poor positioning of the eyelids, eyelid ptosis, epiphora, conjunctival hematomas, retrobulbar hematomas, infections, among other disorders (VIANA *et al.*, 2012).

Thus, it is always necessary to analyze possible complications and evaluate not only the intended results, but also patient safety.

2 METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study - an integrative review of the literature - whose research method allows the synthesis of multiple published studies and allows general conclusions regarding a particular area of study.

The following steps were used for the construction of this review: identification of the theme; selection of the research question; data collection by searching the literature, in electronic databases, with the establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria to select the sample; elaboration of a data collection instrument with the information to be extracted; evaluation of the studies included in the integrative review; interpretation of the results and presentation of the evidenced results.

The guiding question of the research was: What is the relationship between patient satisfaction and complications associated with blepharoplasty? To answer this question, a search of articles published in the last 13 years was performed in the following databases: Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Google Scholar and PubMed.

The inclusion criteria were: articles available free of charge with full text; with qualis A (1 and 2) and B (1, 2, 3 and 4), in English and Portuguese; articles that brought clinical data on techniques, complications, results, degree of patient satisfaction and regret rate in blepharoplasty in articles published and indexed in the aforementioned databases. Articles available only in abstract and studies published in sources that were not available electronically were excluded.

The Health Sciences Descriptors (DECS) were: "Plastic Surgery", "Techniques" and "Eyelid Conjunctiva".

3 RESULTS

In the search for articles, 7 scientific articles were identified according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria presented. The selected articles were summarized and presented in Table 1.



Table 1 – summary of the articles selected for analysis.

Author	Year of work	Type of study	Denouement
ISHIZUKA, C.	2012	Prospective study	Lower blepharoplasty with elevation of the middle third of the face reestablished the anatomy of the periorbital region and presented fewer complications compared to other techniques
NAGAOKA, L.	2016	Retrospective study	In the four groups tested, an improvement in self-esteem was observed.
BASILE, F.	2011	Retrospective study	Eyelid retraction in its various degrees is a complication frequently recognized in the postoperative period of lower blepharoplasty and the correct diagnosis of its causes allows the prophylaxis of this type of complication or the choice of the best appropriate treatment for correction.
VIANA, G.; OSAKI, M.; NISHI, M.	2012	Prospective study	Both surgical techniques showed good results, with a low incidence of complications. Lower blepharoplasty improves physical appearance, producing a positive psychological effect through improved self-esteem, which is visible in the 6th month after surgery.
CHIARI JÚNIOR, A. <i>et al.</i>	2014	Descriptive study	The transpalpebral elevation of the eyebrows associated with upper blepharoplasty has determined gratifying long-term aesthetic effects in patients of several decades.
BERNARDINO, I. P. L.	2023	Descriptive study	Transconjunctival lower blepharoplasty with cutaneous resection without detachment and preservation of the orbicularis muscle, associated or not with cantopepey, proved to be an excellent technique, easily reproducible, reliable, safe and with few postoperative complications for the treatment of senile alterations of the lower eyelids.
THEODORO, P., <i>et al.</i>	2022	Systematic review	The aging process of the face is closely associated with significant changes in the eyelid region. Blepharoplasty has the power to change the general appearance of the face and improve self-esteem. In-depth knowledge allows you to reduce complications.

Cast iron: Ramos, L. N. R., et al. - 2023.

Through the analysis of the selected studies, it was possible to relate and understand the importance of blepharoplasty as a cosmetic surgery with a high degree of complexity and relevance, resuming the need and importance of applying correct methods that seek greater patient satisfaction and at the same time minimize complications and perioperative and postoperative complications.

Ishizuka (2012) demonstrates, through his study, the impact on self-esteem caused by blepharoplasty in patients who underwent the procedure, revealing a difference >2 total points in the Rosenberg self-esteem scale between the pre and postoperative period, it is also possible to relate a significant percentage improvement after a period of 3 months after surgery, elucidating a continuous and progressive surgical improvement.

Nagaoka (2016), on the other hand, contributes with the revelation that despite the use of more aggressive surgical techniques to perform blepharoplasty, such as lower blepharoplasty with elevation of the middle third of the face, the lower complication rates are evident and less severe, in addition to



the reestablishment of the anatomy of the periorbital region, which is obtained through the re-suspension of the anterior lamella, This is not the case with less comprehensive surgical techniques.

At the same time that it is necessary to list the surgical techniques for such an operation, it is also extremely necessary to clarify the possible complications of the operation, such as eyelid retraction, which is a common complication after lower blepharoplasty and other procedures.

Treatment of this complication involves canthal support (canthopexy/canthoplasty) and release of fibrosis in the middle lamella. In severe cases, a spacer graft may be necessary. The emphasis is on prophylaxis, achieved with a broad understanding of the periorbital anatomy and careful preoperative evaluation by the surgeon, considering tarsal ligament function and other parameters (BASILE, 2011).

In addition, Viana (2012) reaffirms the efficacy of canthopexy in reducing eyelid flaccidity before and after surgery, in addition to reporting an increase in self-esteem in 62% of patients after surgery, and, on average, there was a reduction of 1.5 in the postoperative score (3.6) in relation to the preoperative score (5.1) on the Rosenberg self-esteem scale.

In view of the importance of the surgical technique for performing blepharoplasty, Chiari Júnior (2014) states that the transpalpebral elevation of the eyebrows associated with upper blepharoplasty is not only a procedure that has proven to be consistent over 17 years, but also has evident advantages of not using aggressive procedures that leave scars on the scalp and having a high rate of patient satisfaction. The study infers that the most frequent complication has been bilateral paresthesia of the frontal and parietal regions of the scalp, which resolve spontaneously after a few months.

In Bernardino's (2023) study, all cases revealed satisfactory results in relation to the aesthetic evaluation, which was done using anteroposterior and lateral photographs. In the recent postoperative period, corneal irritation, tearing and chemosis were reported in 33% of patients and resolved within a few days. In addition, there were no late complications and surgical reintervention was not necessary in any of the cases.

In addition, it is important to understand that orbitopalpebral alterations are directly related to the normal aging process of the human being. Thus, methods for correcting these alterations, such as blepharoplasty, have their success rate and satisfaction proportional to the level of knowledge and experience of the professional performing the procedure (THEODORO, 2022).

4 DISCUSSION

With the growing popularity of aesthetic procedures, blepharoplasty has had its reach increased and, because of this, new intervention techniques have emerged to make the procedure more innovative for patients and relevant in healthcare. Since it is a region with many noble organs, the reduction of perioperative and postoperative complications becomes one of the most important objectives of the procedure, leading to several approaches that can be made to the patient before performing the surgery.



These approaches include tests that have proven useful in identifying complications based on patient complaints, such as dry eyes and vision obstruction (REBOWE, RUNYAN, 2023).

In addition, the various blepharoplasty techniques that currently exist are favorable to ensure the success of the surgery, as they are able to include themselves in the patient's demand and also avoid possible complications. And with a greater scientific focus in this area, both preoperative and postoperative treatments become more effective in preventing and treating adverse effects. With regard to the aesthetic sphere, failures in the procedure result in consequences of significant importance for the patient, so the implementation and study of approaches that reduce the risks of this surgery assume a crucial relevance.

Although there is a wide variety of contemporary blepharoplasty techniques and modern wound closure options, it is noticeable that plastic surgery, in general, plays a crucial role in improving patients' self-esteem. An increase in self-esteem was observed in all groups studied, regardless of the specific technique used (ISHIZUKA, 2012).

In this context, restoration to a more youthful appearance is the goal of cosmetic surgery, boosting patient satisfaction and also their self-esteem from the remodeling of the face structure. Postoperative research on blepharoplasty has shown improved self-esteem, life satisfaction, sexuality, coping with stress and anxiety when compared to groups that did not have surgery. Thus, it can be seen that the benefits of cosmetic surgery go beyond a remodeling of the face, but also involve the broad spectrum of health, both bodily and psychological (VIANA, OSAKI, NISHI, 2010).

There is no consensus on the best approach for cosmetic surgeries on the lower eyelid. Each plastic surgeon develops his or her own preferences, and the outcome of blepharoplasty is dependent on several variables. While some authors advocate maintaining fat pockets, others are against manipulation of the orbicularis muscle, and some recommend a comprehensive detachment of the myocutaneous flap. Despite this, none of these approaches are universal and cannot be applied to all patients. The approach should be personalized and individualized to achieve the best results and reduce the risk of complications (ISHIZUKA, 2012).

In the midst of the emergence of several techniques and operating models, transconjunctival lower blepharoplasty with cutaneous resection without detachment and preservation of the orbicularis muscle was observed to be an excellent technique, given its easy reproduction, high degree of reliability and safety, in addition to the few problems generated by the postoperative period (BERNADINO, 2023).

5 CONCLUSION

In summary, the rising popularity of blepharoplasty reflects not only an aesthetic pursuit, but also a demand for innovation and safety in healthcare. The increased scope of this procedure has led



to the development of new techniques aimed at improving aesthetic results and reducing perioperative and postoperative complications.

In addition, the variety of contemporary techniques highlights the constant evolution of plastic surgery, playing a crucial role in improving patients' self-esteem. Studies show that blepharoplasty not only raises self-esteem, but also contributes to life satisfaction and interpersonal relationships.

Ultimately, blepharoplasty not only physically reshapes the face but also plays a significant role in promoting health, encompassing both the bodily and psychological well-being of patients. Therefore, the approach should be individual for each patient, according to the patient's interest and possibilities.



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