Usage of Digital Photography in Rhinoplasty. Does it Increase Patient Satisfaction?

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Abstract
Taking pre-operative patient photographs is a routine practice by almost all facial plastic surgeons while taking post operative ones is not. Comparing pre and post operative photographs helps demonstrate even the minor changes may serve to increase patient satisfaction with post operative results at minimal added cost and effort.

Methods and Materials
This was a prospective study which took place from June 2014 to December 2014 in King Abdulaziz University Hospital, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Satisfaction with surgery results of all patients who underwent rhinoplasty by a single surgeon was assessed 12 months after the procedure. We used a translated Arabic version of the Rhinoplasty Outcome Evaluation questionnaire ROE by Alsarraf (Table 1) and a general satisfaction questionnaire (Table 2). The Arabic version of ROE was first validated by means of back translation and by initially testing it on a small group of patients. Satisfaction rate was then reassessed after showing them their pre and post-operative photographs. ROE was used as it is the most extensively evaluated rhinoplasty satisfaction tool. It is also simple, easy to understand, valid, reliable, and sensitive to change.

Results
Eighty patients were included in the study, 52 females and 28 males. Their age ranged between 17 and 46 years (Mean 27.6 ± 6.153). 65% were primary rhinoplasties while 35% were revision cases. 82.5% were satisfied with their results initially compared with 87.5% after the photograph review (Table 1). There were a significant difference as well between ROE scores before and after reviewing the pre operative photographs (t=2.488, sig<0.016).

Conclusion
Comparing pre and post operative photographs aids to better demonstrate post operative changes and achieve higher patient satisfaction with rhinoplasty results with minimal additional effort, cost, and consultation time.

Introduction
Patients’ satisfaction with the results of any cosmetic surgery is a major concern for all cosmetic surgeons, and is unfortunately a relatively neglected area of research. Despite of rhinoplasty being the second most commonly performed facial plastic procedure worldwide, few evaluation tools have been developed to assess the extent of patient satisfaction post-operatively.

Evaluation of rhinoplasty candidates requires a careful study of overall facial proportion. The patient consultation usually involves taking multiple photographs, detailed exploration of patient expectations and ideals, and discussing what can be done to enhance the external appearance. These photographs may as well serve as an aid for the patient to appreciate the changes after surgery, as most patients get accustomed quickly to their new appearance. Few surgeons have developed the habit of routinely showing the patients their pre-operative photographs and comparing them with their post-operative ones. Those who do believe that by using this method, they are achieving better patient satisfaction due to better demonstration of even the minor changes in physical appearance.

We are unaware of the presence of any study exploring the impact of comparing pre and post operative photographs on patient satisfaction with rhinoplasty surgery. We have using this method for our patients for over 2 years and we aim to test its usefulness in regards to patient satisfaction with surgery results.

Discussion
Patient satisfaction with surgical outcome should be the ultimate goal of any facial plastic procedure, irrespective of the surgeon’s opinion on the degree of success. Unfortunately, objectively quantifying the degree of success or failure is challenging as it is influenced by many subjective factors such as patient expectations, perception of external appearance, surgical expenses and downtime.

Evaluation of rhinoplasty candidates requires a careful study of overall facial proportion. The patient consultation usually involves taking multiple photographs, detailed exploration of patient expectations and ideals, discussing what can be done to enhance the external appearance, which may involve multiple procedures.

Our results propose a simple approach that can lead to significant increase patient satisfaction with rhinoplasty results with minimal additional cost and effort on the operating surgeon (Chart 1).

Conclusions
The authors believe that comparing pre and post operative photographs aids to achieve higher patient satisfaction with rhinoplasty results, and possibly any facial plastic procedure. Implementing this approach routinely in our practice has required minimal additional effort, cost, and consultation time but resulted in significant increase in patient satisfaction. We plan to determine its impact on patient satisfaction with longer period of follow-up for various facial plastic procedures.

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References