

Plastic Surgery/Self-Image Questions (part 1)

What do you like most about yourself (physical and personality traits)?

Any suggestions from other group members?

What don't you like about yourself? (physically and otherwise)

What would you like to change about yourself?

When you see yourself in a photo, what do you usually like or dislike about what you see?

Who do you think is the most beautiful/handsome person in Korea? in the world?

What makes them so attractive?

Who is the most attractive in your family?

Plastic Surgery/Self-Image Questions (part 2)

How do you think self-esteem and physical attractiveness affect each other?

In what ways does society (especially Korean society) help boost and destroy individual self-esteem?

Does beauty affect one's success in life?

Is it better to be physically attractive, intelligent, or wealthy?

Do people spend much time and money on beauty?

How much time do you spend making yourself look better each day? What do you do?

What do you think about plastic surgery?

Would you ever have plastic surgery?

If so, what would you change?

Do you think there should be an age limit for people to have plastic surgery? How old?

Why do you think plastic surgery is so popular Korea?

What are the most popular types of cosmetic alteration in Korea? Why?

Do you think low self-esteem is a major reason why people choose to get plastic surgery?

How does your generation of Korean men and women approach beauty differently from your parents?

Is your ideal of beauty different than your parents or grandparents?

What do you think of the proverb, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder?"

Do you think beauty is objective or subjective?

Do you think tattoos can be attractive?

How many tattoos are too many? Do you have a tattoo? Would you ever get a tattoo?

Do you think people with many piercings can be attractive?

What kind of body piercing, if any, do you feel are acceptable? Which are unacceptable?

Are beauty pageants good or bad? Why?

What are some of the drawbacks of being very attractive physically?

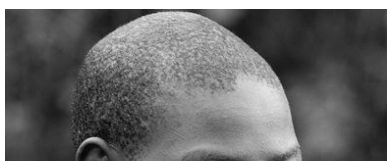
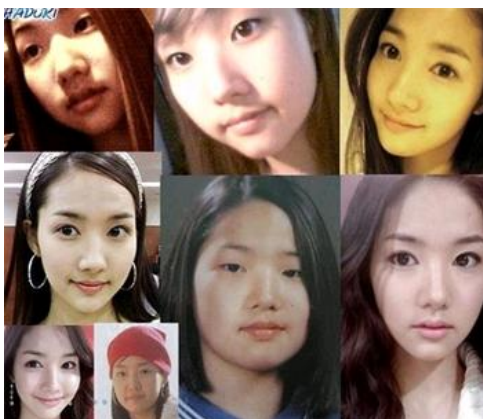
Do you think skin color affects whether a person is regarded as beautiful or not?

Do you think that fairer skin makes a person more attractive?

How is the Korean ideal of beauty different than the Western ideal of beauty?

Do you think the popularity of plastic surgery in Asia is partially a result of emulating Western beauty?

Would you prefer to 'age gracefully' and naturally, or battle the toll of time by going 'under the knife'?



Plastic Surgery is a modern phenomenon with major implications. Though

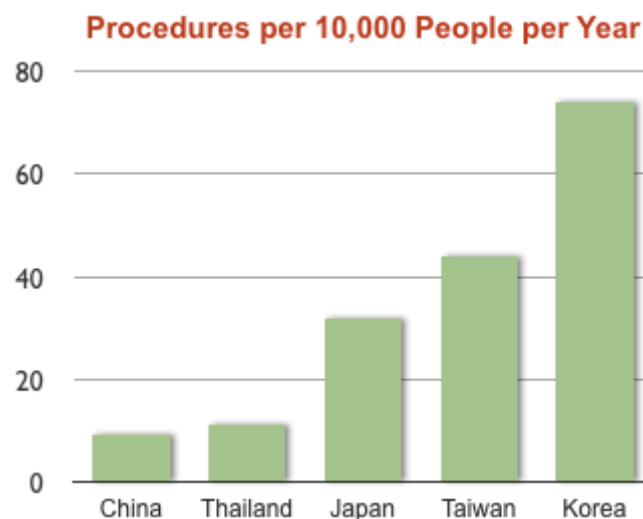
the art of altering one's body to be more socially accepted is something that has been going on since ancient times, only recently has the fad become truly medical and gained the ability to change almost any part of the outer body.

There are major differences between reconstructive and aesthetic plastic surgery. Reconstructive surgery is surgery that is necessary for an individual to be able to function normally, whether it be physically or socially. As much as we try to hide it, a child born without an ear definitely cannot function normally in society, especially in the mean world of grade school. Aesthetic Surgery, though, is completely voluntary and unnecessary for normal human functioning. These are surgeries like Liposuction, Breast Augmentation, Tummy tucks, and more, which help the person look better and increase his/her self esteem. Dr. Powers talked about how many Asian girls, including herself, got eyelid surgery, which was for purely aesthetic reasons.

So why do people opt to get Plastic Surgery? Is it because they have low self esteem, crave attention, or are forced to by an image-obsessed society? I believe that there is a definite relationship between aesthetic plastic surgery and low self esteem. According to Cynthia Figueroa, " Self-esteem refers to the degree to which people are satisfied or dissatisfied with themselves." If people are satisfied with themselves and their bodies, they would have no need to resort to aesthetic plastic surgery. It would not make any sense. In any case low self esteem likely is a common denominator between the multitudes of women and men who seek plastic surgery in ever increasing numbers every year. According to Figueroa, " Several studies report associations between negatively perceived body image changes and lowered self-esteem. These negative body images lead to people who want plastic surgery to magically fix the problems that they perceive to have. Another factor may be the increasing Westernization of the world. Many cultures in the world do not value the Barbie figured women, rather the larger and fuller female is considered more attractive. As more and more parts of the world are integrated into the the world of mass media and subjected to Hollywood and other glamorous forms of media, this will only increase.

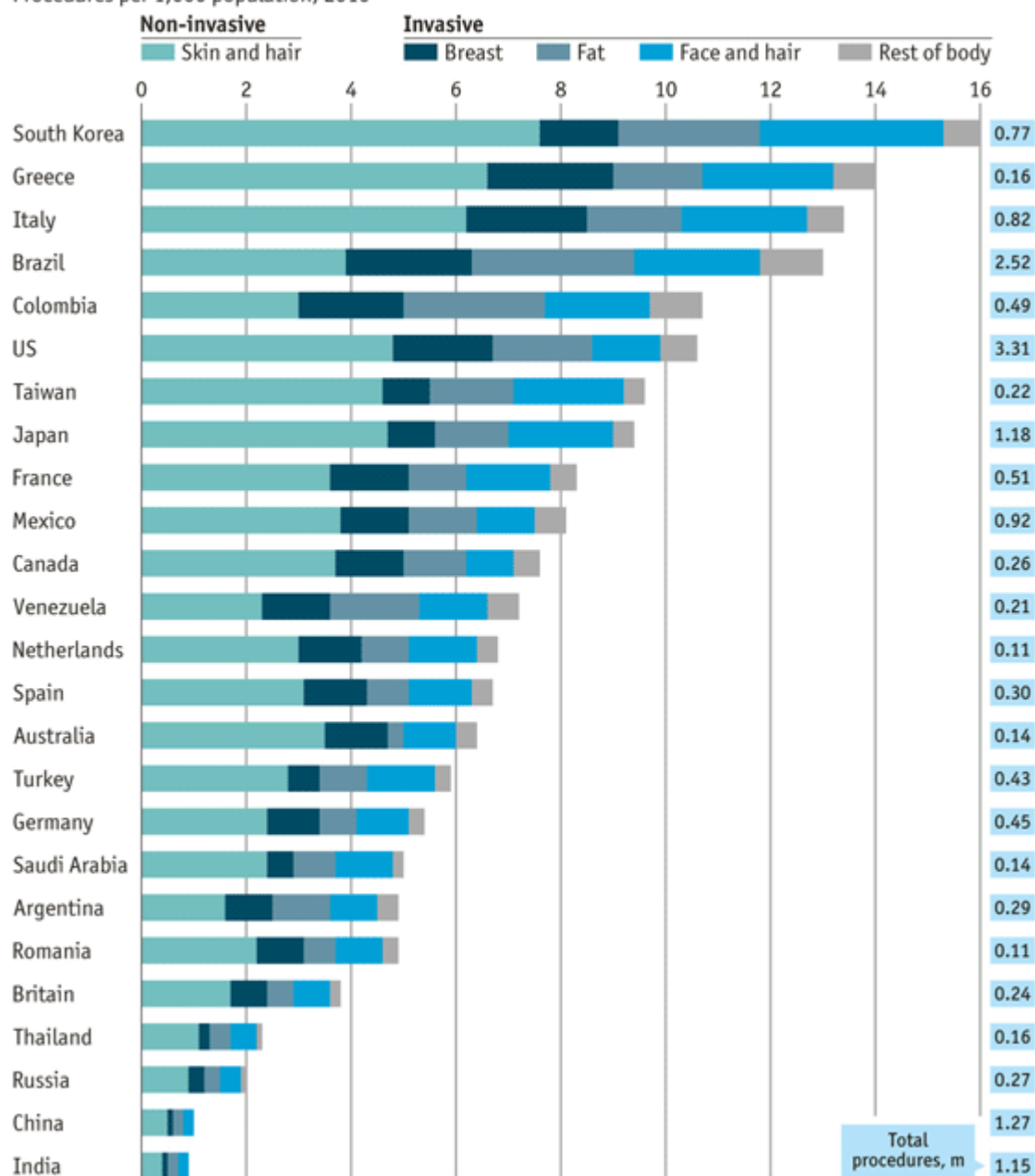
The real problems lies in the society that has been so brainwashed by the media and society to believe that technology is the solution to all problems. The media continues to feed us this with shows like "Extreme Makeover", which, even though it makes a strong effort to not sensationalize plastic surgery, still shows us the magic of the changes that can be done to ordinary people. Dr. Powers did tell us that some of her patients referred to the show as to why they wanted cosmetic surgery, so it has obviously had some effect. Likewise, it seems that human views on beauty only seem to get more unrealistic year by year.

As plastic surgery inevitably becomes better, more efficient, and cheaper it will be interesting to see if this will be accompanied by a rise in its usage. Science continues to make strives in anti-aging technologies, we are now able to do miracles with the body that were unthinkable only 50 years ago. What will the face of cosmetic surgery look like in another 50 years? Will it also be unthinkable to us today? Only time will tell.



Plastic surgery

Procedures per 1,000 population, 2010



Sources: International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery; UN