

Editorial

Orthognathic surgery impact on quality of life

Orthognathic surgery is the most common surgical procedure to correct severe dentofacial deformities. In addition to long-term stability, functional impact and aesthetics, surgery is reported to be extremely important in quality of life. Patients' complaint and expectation associated with planned and performed bone movement directly influence on treatment success and satisfaction of both patient and surgeon.

From a functional point of view, it promotes a harmonious and stable relationship between upper and lower dental arches, providing occlusal balance. This balance, in the majority of cases, would not be possible to be achieved with only orthodontics movements. Orthognathic surgery also improves phonetics. Bone discrepancy correction provides a better tongue positioning especially in patients with anterior open bite. Breathing is also reported to improve through changes in pharyngeal airway volume. Many studies have shown orthognathic surgery as a treatment choice for patients with obstructive sleep apnea.

From an aesthetic point of view, orthognathic surgery leads to changes in patients' soft tissue profile according to the bone movement performed, and may changes nose-positioning, lips and chin. Patient's aesthetics perception is extremely important as well, regarding the fact that different people possesses different face symmetry and balance perceptions. It is also known that psychosocial aspects are directly related to treatment due to facial appearance influences body image formation, identity and self-esteem. Currently many surgical teams already count with psychologists in order to determine patient's aesthetic profile as well as relevant psychosocial aspects.

Some researchers have already assessed orthognathic surgery impact on quality of life. Studies suggest functional, aesthetics and psychological improvements after three months of surgical procedure for any kind of deformity. Patients with maxilla vertical excess and anteroposterior mandible excess are reported to present a greater quality of life improvement when compared to other dentofacial deformities. Another important aspect is the different discrepancy perception between men and women. Studies report that women exhibit a great self-esteem increase as well as depressive symptoms reduction after surgery.

Therefore, orthognathic surgery may not only be classified as a functional or cosmetic surgery since it changes patients life as a whole, from body form to image perception. With all this background it becomes obvious that surgery alters patients quality of life, improving occlusal balance, phonetics, breathing and aesthetics perception, leading to important psychosocial changes.

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