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Despite Economic Uncertainty Women Under 45 Fuel Surge in Cosmetic Surgery Demand

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According to data obtained from the inaugural *Insights and Trends 2022* report by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, in the 18-month period after the height of the pandemic, people are choosing to undergo cosmetic procedures to feel better. Through a survey sent specifically to aesthetic-focused practices, the organization found nearly 30 percent had seen demand double since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The report indicates despite the economic uncertainty that is going on right now, people are still prioritizing their spending towards things that benefit them and make them feel more confident,” says Houston plastic surgeon and ASPS officer C. Bob Basu, MD. “In fact, more than 75 percent of cosmetic-focused plastic surgery practices indicated they are seeing more business than before the pandemic; more than 25 percent reported they are seeing twice the demand than before the pandemic.”

Xennials Take the Lead

One of the biggest takeaways from the report is the age group driving the market: “Millennials and younger members of Generation X, aged 31 to 45, are the predominant age group seeking out the most popular cosmetic procedures per this report. However, we’re seeing men and

women of varying ages, ethnicities and backgrounds seeking a wide range of procedures,” explains Dr. Basu.

Motivating Factors

When pinpointing the reason for the pendulum shift toward more aesthetic procedures, the report found that most motivations stemmed from life changes due to the pandemic. Respondents said their patients cited not traveling as much, wanting to do anything to “feel good,” remote work, self-consciousness stemming from Zoom meetings, and an “if not now, when” attitude as reasons for the increase in patients seeking procedures.

“Nearly half of respondents said the reason they’re seeking out surgery is because they have not been traveling as much and are now using travel budget for surgery, while others have noted that they were motivated to get surgery because the pandemic and isolation left them feeling a lack of confidence in themselves—a feeling they wanted to address through cosmetic surgery,” adds Dr. Basu. “Other reasons include to feel refreshed and look younger after aging from pandemic stress or noticing body changes that they want to improve now that there is more in-person interaction.”

A Surge in Demand

When it comes to the increase in aesthetics, experts still point to the Zoom Boom we’ve experienced over the last two and a half years. “We’ve seen a surge in demand for facial procedures but also surgeries for the breast and body and it all ties back to the pandemic-effect,” notes Dr. Basu. The Zoom Boom is a result of seeing ourselves up-close on video conference calls, bringing extra attention to our faces, eyes and neck. “Hence, we’ve seen a significant increase in facial plastic surgery procedures and botulinum and filler treatments.” Seeking to improve their bodies after a few stressful years, the *Insights and Trends* report also noted procedures like breast augmentation and liposuction topped the list.

According to Oakland, CA plastic surgeon **Steven Williams, MD** who serves as Vice President of ASPS, the recent plastic surgery boom can also be attributed to accessibility. “As procedures become less invasive, the concept of ‘preventative’ plastic surgery has been embraced by younger patients,” notes the surgeon. “If we can perform surgeries in a minimally invasive fashion while managing patient concerns earlier on, it may delay or avoid having to use more invasive, larger plastic surgery procedures to keep patients looking and feeling their best.”

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