

Cosmetic surgery appeals to men, women with appearance-based rejection sensitivity

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Researchers have found that men and women who feel sensitive to rejection based on their physical appearance are more likely to express interest in having cosmetic surgery than those who are less sensitive to appearance-based rejection. This effect is particularly true when people recall negative comments about their physical appearance.

The study, which appeared in the June issue of the journal [Body Image](#), was conducted by Lora E. Park, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology at the University at Buffalo; Rachel M. Calogero, Ph.D., lecturer in psychology at the University of Kent, and Melissa J. Harwin and Ann Marie DiRaddo, former graduate students in the UB Department of Psychology.

The study examined the role of appearance-based rejection sensitivity -- the tendency to anxiously expect rejection based on one's appearance -- among men and women's interest in cosmetic surgery. A copy of the study is available at <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/pdf/June09/LoraParkCosmeticSurgeryStudy.pdf>.

For the study, a total of 133 American college students were randomly assigned to write an essay about either a negative or positive comment about their appearance that they had received in the past. Compared to participants with lower appearance-based rejection sensitivity, those with higher sensitivity felt more rejected and expressed greater interest in getting cosmetic surgery after recalling a negative versus positive

appearance comment.

Results were found even after controlling for other individual difference variables, such as overall self-esteem, general rejection sensitivity, appearance contingent self worth and self-perceived attractiveness.

Negative appearance comments were most often made in reference to body weight/shape/size, the study participants reported, whereas positive appearance comments were most often made in reference to overall appearance. Peers/friends/[romantic partners](#) were the most frequently cited source of both positive and negative appearance comments.

"The results of this study suggest that individuals who anxiously expect rejection based on their appearance are vulnerable to the effects of negative comments about their appearance," says Park. "Sensitivity to appearance rejection may therefore be a key psychological variable to consider when examining responses to teasing related to appearance, especially with regard to feeling rejected and expressing interest in cosmetic surgery," she adds.

Source: University at Buffalo ([news](#) : [web](#))

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