

'Hundreds' of Austrian women had PIP implants: report

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Hundreds of Austrian women, many more than the eight as first thought, may have had potentially dangerous French-made breast implants in cheap operations in eastern Europe, a press report said Sunday.

The official number of [women](#) affected by the scandal is eight, but this does not cover "probably hundreds" who had operations in places such as Hungary and the Czech Republic, the Presse am Sonntag weekly reported.

Some 300,000 women in 65 countries are estimated to have had implants made by the now defunct French firm PIP, which allegedly used an illegal industrial-grade gel that investigators say has led to abnormally high rupture rates.

The health scare erupted in France in December, where authorities have already advised 30,000 women to have implants removed, while more than a dozen countries in Europe and in Latin America have urged women to seek regular checkups.

Many Austrian women went east, particularly the Czech Republic and Hungary, for operations that were around a third cheaper than their home country, Die Presse am Sonntag said.

Eastern Europe has long been a popular destination for people, particularly Austrians and Germans, seeking cheaper plastic surgery than in their home countries, the paper said, with many clinics employing

German-speaking staff.

Since the scandal broke, clinics in Austria have been inundated by women worried about their implants, the report said.

It cited one Vienna [plastic surgeon](#), Thomas Aigner, who has offered to remove implants for free, as saying he had had hundreds of enquiries from "scared patients", with 40 saying they had PIP implants.

"Every single one of them had their operations in the Czech Republic and Hungary," Aigner told the paper.

The Czech health ministry said earlier this month that its experts had not yet detected any "acute risk of serious [health problems](#)" but recommended women with PIP [implants](#) to have them removed.

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