

Ecuadoran beauty queen dies following liposuction

January 14 2015

A young beauty queen has died in Ecuador after undergoing liposuction surgery that she had received as a prize, her family said, calling the operation a case of medical malpractice.

Catherine Cando Cornejo, a 19-year-old student who in October was named "Queen of Duran," a town near the port city of Guayaquil, died Saturday during abdominal liposuction.

Members of her [family](#) said that she was admitted to surgery at a Guayaquil clinic at 8:23 am (1323 GMT), for waist reduction meant to take off three centimeters (one inch).

Around 6:00 pm, nearly 10 hours later, her family was notified she had died.

"My sister did not want the operation because she was afraid, but the doctor insisted on several occasions... and convinced her to undergo surgery," Daniel Zavala Cornejo told reporters.

Family lawyer Carlos Reyes said the young beauty queen died of cerebral edema or swelling of the brain.

"The clinic lawyer said the death was due to [cardiac arrest](#), but we have a copy of the autopsy and it turns out the cause was stated as [cerebral edema](#); this is presumably due to problems with anesthesia," Reyes told the press.

According to a complaint filed by the family, the surgery was awarded for winning the pageant.

But a spokesman for the mayor said the doctor who performed the operation was on the jury and had given the young winner a \$1,000 coupon for [surgery](#).

"We made it clear that the prizes we hand out, our prizes, were a car and tablet," he told AFP.

Authorities are investigating the case and have not made any arrests.

Under Ecuador law, professional malpractice, including [medical malpractice](#), is punishable with one to three years in prison.

President Rafael Correa has previously criticized beauty pageants, ordering the Education Ministry in 2010 to ban the events in public schools on grounds that they had no educational value and were sexist.

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Citation: Ecuadoran beauty queen dies following liposuction (2015, January 14) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-01-ecuadoran-beauty-queen-dies-liposuction.html>

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