

Social media found to contribute to increase in cosmetic procedures

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Influencers on social media have contributed to an uptake of people using cosmetic procedures to enhance their appearance, research suggests.

Instagram influencers who have had procedures—such as botox, and lip and face fillers—tend to promote the benefits of the enhancements without disclosing the downsides, the study found.

Face filters

The participants were quizzed about their use of Instagram and face filters—software that manipulates the shape of a face on screen—to inform their decision-making about cosmetic procedures.

The study found all of the participants looked to Instagram influencers for information about [cosmetic procedures](#).

The influencers stories of body transformation were instrumental in participants looking for information and recommendations about cosmetic procedures, the researchers say.

Respondents found influencers to be relatable—more so than celebrities—as they could see evidence of the procedures on real people.

The researchers also analyzed additional data sources, such as the use of hashtags such as #dermafillers #botox and #lipfillers, to help understand how Instagram shapes beauty ideals.

Social platforms

They also examined the influence of face-filters on [social platforms](#) that superimpose potential surgery options onto selfies using augmented reality (AR).

The study found digital enhancing filters could drive consumers towards cosmetic procedures in the hope of bringing the digitally enhanced

versions of themselves to life.

Researchers say the data reveals how [influencers](#) often fail to highlight the risks involved in cosmetic procedures by portraying the enhancements as just another type of beauty treatment such as a manicure or hair extensions.

Experts believe the study sheds light on the darker side of [social media](#) and body-enhancing technologies where Instagram can trivialize the risks of cosmetic interventions, and AR technology promotes unrealistic beauty standards.

"The study found a tendency for cosmetic procedures to be portrayed as effortless and normal on social media—such as fillers being as normal as a manicure. This along with data on the impact of face filters and digitally enhancing apps helps us understand the effect of image-based platforms such as Instagram on consumer's decision making. And more alarmingly on our [body image](#)," says Dr. Victoria Rodner of the University of Edinburgh Business School.

The study is published in the *Journal of Services Marketing*.

More information: Victoria Rodner et al, "Is it all just lip service?": on Instagram and the normalisation of the cosmetic servicescape, *Journal of Services Marketing* (2021). [DOI: 10.1108/JSM-12-2020-0506](https://doi.org/10.1108/JSM-12-2020-0506)

Provided by University of Edinburgh

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