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Understanding beauty and the approach to body dysmorphic disorder

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This lecture discusses the historical importance of beauty and offers an overview of the objective and subjective aspects of beauty to segue into a discussion of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). The lecture will begin with an analysis of what the human eye finds aesthetically pleasing including symmetry, averageness, sexual dimorphism, skin homogeneity, and proportions. Also to be discussed are how these biologic perceptions can be reshaped through individual, cultural, and historical influences. The course will then focus on disorders of self perception, BDD, including a discussion of the history, epidemiology, symptoms, diagnosis including use of questionnaires, and implications for treating physicians. The lecture will conclude by providing an algorithmic approach to persons with suspected BDD and treatment options. BDD occurs in 1-2% of the general population and 6-15% of dermatology and cosmetic surgery patients. In a BDD cohort, 50% sought treatment from a dermatologist and 33% requested cosmetic surgery. These patients are often unhappy with results with over 90% reporting symptoms unchanged or worsened after cosmetic procedures. This disorder is under recognized and should be approached with both sympathy and empathy given the high rate of suicidal ideation in these patients. Recognition and appropriate referral key to management.

Biography

Neelam A Vashi, MD, FAAD is a board certified Dermatologist and a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology. She is an Assistant Professor of Dermatology at Boston University School of Medicine. She is also the Director of Research in Cosmetic and Laser Medicine and the Founder and Director of the Boston University Center for Ethnic Skin. She received her Medical degree from Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, where she was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society. After her internship at Northwestern University, she completed her dermatology residency at New York University (NYU). She is a recognized leader in medical and cosmetic dermatology. She is widely published in the peer-reviewed literature, author of several book chapters, and is a frequent lecturer at both national and international dermatology meetings. She is editor and lead author of a book entitled, "*Beauty and Body Dysmorphic Disorder: A Clinician's Guide*".

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