

Body  
Dysmorphic **Disorder**





*Demand for cosmetic surgery in Dubai has significantly increased by over 100 percent since last year. About 68,000 males and females visited cosmetic clinics in Dubai last year, according to the report of the Dubai Health Authority (DHA). The report suggested that of this 68,000, 13,000 were Emirati women and 2,000 were Emirati man. reported Emarat Al Youm.* ”



From the surge in plastic surgery procedures to a size zero body popular culture's ideal of beauty, is it any wonder that Body Dysmorphic Disorder is on the rise?

**Saadiya Ahmad** investigates this perplexing condition...

**A**lizeh Khan, a 34-year-old Pakistani public relations executive in Dubai is a self-confessed plastic surgery addict. “My first operation was when I was 24 and had a nose job. I loved the way it changed my profile so after a year, I had a chin implant from the same doctor here in Dubai and was pleased with the results. But I just couldn't stop – by the time I hit 30, I had a new jaw line to add more dimensions to my face, as well as new cheekbones. I was constantly told at work that I looked amazing and this prompted me to go for more procedures. I did Botox before the lines formed, I had my lips plumped and once my face was done I moved to my body. By the seventh operation, my surgeon was a little weary of me and advised I stop and seek psychological help. This really outraged me. I just wanted to look my best and I felt he was implying that I had a mental problem? Needless to say, I switched doctors and now will be having my legs sculpted as well doing something with my breasts and buttocks.”

### Defined

More than mere narcissism, Body Dysmorphic Disorder or BDD is a mental condition in which a person is preoccupied with minor or imaginary physical deformity usually of the skin, hair and nose, such as facial lines, marks, pale or dark skin, thinning hair, excessive body hair, acne scars, large or crooked nose, explains Dr. Firas A. Hamdan, Board Certified Consultant Plastic Surgeon at The Cosmetic Surgery Clinic, Lebanon. “The person complains of a defect in either one or several features of their body which causes psychological distress that cause clinically significant distress or impair



Dr. Firas A. Hamdan

occupational or social functioning. And while statistically this is equal among males and females, as 70 percent of my patients are female, I do see more females with BDD in my practice.”

Dr. Tara Wyne, Clinical Psychologist/ Clinical Director at The LightHouse Arabia Clinic adds that an individual suffering from BDD can't stop thinking about a flaw with his/her appearance. “The illness has sometimes been called ‘imagined ugliness’ and the when you have BDD, you intensely obsess over your appearance and body image, and you seek out aesthetic procedures to try to ‘fix’ your perceived flaws, but never will be satisfied,” she says.

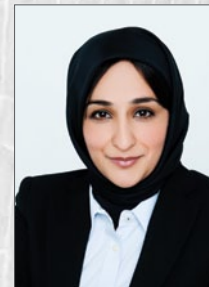
## Signs

One red flag for a plastic surgeon that may indicate BDD is that a patient may come for consultation and explain that they want several different procedures when realistically they are not necessary at all, says Dr. Qassim Ahli, Consultant Plastic Surgeon at Dermalase Clinic. “These could be concerns such as fat which is not at all apparent, shape of the nose or breast size,” he explains, as well as the individual who is well informed about procedures and keeps abreast of current trends. “Often the

individual has had surgery previously and complains that it isn't good enough and may constantly try to look in the mirror or at their reflection and pick flaws in things which only they can see.” Other common signs, points out Dr. Raj Kumar Gang, Senior Consultant Plastic and Cosmetic Surgeon at Ibn Nafees Hospital in Bahrain include a lack of confidence due to the feeling of not being good looking, the individual may also suffer from insomnia, depression, irritation and may altogether shun socialising.

Yet statistics show that close to one to two percent of the population struggles with BDD, so does this mean that anyone seeking plastic surgery is actually suffering from BDD? According to Dr. Francisco de Melo, Consultant Plastic Surgeon at the Aesthetica Clinic, Dubai, individuals who present for cosmetic treatment have some degree of body image dissatisfaction, and that is the reason why they seek for correction. “For me, the most important diagnostic tool of recognising BDD is the dimension and the degree of distress the impairment causes,” he says, for example, a slight nose defect is not a reason to abandon school or a job. “Also most of the cosmetic patients are self conscious

of an appearance defect, but don't ‘allow it’ to interfere with their lives, and are functioning appropriately,” he says. These are the ones whom can be helped by plastic surgery, and for who appropriate surgical procedures can be beneficial in improving their body image, appearance and self-esteem.



Dr. Tara Wyne

## Plastic Surgery

Face lifts, Tummy tuck, breast enlargement or reduction – the procedures are endless, but for some no amount nip and tuck will ever make them feel better. According to Dr. Ahli, liposuction is the most addictive procedure because once one area has been done; patients often want further areas treated. “Breast surgery is also addictive. Those who have already had an implant may wish to go even bigger and even minor procedures such as lip filler can compound the obsessive tendency; however these are much less traumatic and easy to reverse providing a recognised product has been used,” he says. Yet most BDD sufferers, especially those who remain undiagnosed, fail to recognise that their problem originates in the brain, and instead, they mistakenly believe that if they could only correct their ‘deformed’ physical appearance, all would be well, says Dr. Wyne, so they seek out plastic surgery, assuming that the surgeon will immediately see how severe their defects are, and will correct them, thereby magically transforming their lives. “Yet unfortunately, people who suffer from BDD are rarely satisfied with the outcomes of their surgeries. They often obsess over scars, or they may be driven to near-madness over the slightest asymmetry of the result while others shift their focus to another perceived defect that was not adjusted by the surgery,” she says.

## Prevalence

Dr. Gang points out that the link between plastic surgery addiction and BDD is great as the BDD sufferer will repeatedly seek the advice of a plastic surgeon for procedures done and dissatisfied with, whereas in fact, one plastic surgery procedure will lead to another and then another. And while BDD can affect anyone, says Dr. Wyne, it





most commonly develops in the teenage years. When it arises it usually becomes a chronic condition unless it is treated. "Ultimately, there's no sure way to prevent body dysmorphic disorder as it often starts in adolescence, identifying children at risk of the condition and starting treatment early may be beneficial." In addition, taking steps to control stress, to increase your resilience and to boost low self-esteem are useful. And while BDD patients tend to focus more on the skin, hair and nose, there is also some differences regarding the gender, says Dr. De Melo. "Men are more preoccupied with their genitals, height, hair and body, where women show more concern about weight, breasts, hips and legs.

### Causes/Triggers

BDD usually develops in teenagers at a time when individuals are most concerned about the way they appear to others, says Dr. Wyne. "However, many patients suffer for years before seeking help and there is

no single cause for this ailment. Genetic pre-disposition does appear to be a factor in determining who may develop BDD, however environmental factors can also have an effect including severe teasing by peers." Similarly to teasing, parenting style may contribute to BDD onset; for example, parents who either place excessive emphasis on aesthetic appearance, or disregard it altogether, may act as a trigger in the genetically predisposed. Other possible triggers include other life experiences, such as neglect, physical and/or sexual trauma, insecurity and rejection as well as the individual's environment and culture. Also BDD can often occur with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) where the patient practices unmanageable habitual behaviours that may literally take over their life, says Dr. Wyne.

### Ethics

Yet where does the doctor draw the line at outlandish repeated requests of "just one

more procedure?" Dr. De Melo responds, "For me cosmetic surgery is like any medical treatment where there is a problem and different therapeutic alternatives to treat it. We just have to find the one that is more adequate to the particular patient. If I cannot do any good or if I am not able to perform what it is required, I just refuse the patient or refer him to someone with the right qualification to handle is problem." He adds that the ultimate goal of plastic surgery is to enhance physical proportion and to correct deformity. "And amongst the cosmetic surgery patient's population, the incidence of BDD is higher in a range from 3.2 to 16 percent. The BDD patient will not be satisfied by a single correction, as the problem doesn't lie in the body but in their perception of the body. Then after the given procedure they will find another problem to correct and to blame for their lack of success and functional impairment. He shares a case study of a 36-year-old patient. "She visited my Lisbon office asking

## The Quest for Eternal Youth

Cindy Jackson became famous for the unheard of amount of plastic surgery she has undergone. Cindy claims to be the original extreme makeover and has written books about plastic surgery and what she has learned after undergoing over 50 cosmetic procedures. She holds the official world record for "Most Cosmetic Procedures", after undergoing 52 cosmetic procedures by the age of 55. Cindy has spent approximately \$100,000 on plastic surgery that includes 14 actual operations (five full face lifts, lots of liposuction, two eye lifts, chin reduction, lip implants, multiple boob jobs, nose job, cheek implants). The rest of the 38 cosmetic procedures are less invasive injectables (Botox and fillers), chemical peels, cosmetic dentistry and semi-permanent makeup. Most recently, Cindy Jackson had her hands injected with filler in an attempt to hide the veins and make them appear younger.

(Credit: <http://famousplastic.com/category/plastic-surgery-addiction>)

for eyelid surgery which would have made it her 34th surgical procedure and the second one for the correction of excess skin around the eyelids. I refused to do it on the basis that there were no surgical indication for it.” Exercising extreme caution, he and his non-medical staff were able to get her in to psychiatric counselling and end the endless surgical spiral that she was going down.

### Media

From airbrushed images to the clever use of Photoshop, Dr. Ahli notes that unfortunately the media play a huge role in exacerbating BDD for those with a latent tendency. “We are constantly fed pictures of near perfect women who have been air brushed to a degree that is completely unrealistic,” he says. In addition, plastic surgery has become the norm as the media feed us more and more images of celebrities who have gone under the knife and people become affected by this. There is absolutely nothing wrong with wanting to make small changes to enhance your appearance however, expecting to look like one of these

models in the magazines is not a healthy expectation to hold,” he says. Dr. Wyne adds that people with any personality traits or vulnerability to developing BDD will be more susceptible to images of perfection in the media. “As they are so concerned with their flawed appearance, they will be making unfavourable comparisons with beautiful flawless celebrities and models and it can intensify their sense of imperfection,” she says.

### Treatment

Treatment for BDD usually entails a multi-modal approach, beginning with cognitive behavioural therapy, which attempts to get patients to recognise irrational thoughts and then challenge those thoughts with more rational positive self-talk learned in therapy, says Dr. Wyne. “Also effective is a type of therapy called ‘exposure and response prevention’, commonly used in the treatment of phobias in which patients may be asked to write a list of situations they would normally avoid out of fear or anxiety about their looks,” she says and

the goal is that over time, the patient will begin to see the situation and others like it in a more realistic light, thereby rendering the situation less threatening in the patient’s mind. The component of treatment known as ‘response prevention’ is all about decreasing the incidence of ritualistic behaviours that have been previously used by the patient to deal with anxiety-producing situations, she says and these behaviours may include compulsively checking the mirror, constantly adjusting one’s outward appearance by applying and reapplying cosmetics, picking at the skin, or even forms of self-mutilation. Another tool used to treat BDD is medication, she says as BDD is a brain disorder which falls under the diagnostic umbrella of “chemical imbalances”. “The main neuro-chemical involved in the manifestation of BDD is Serotonin, therefore, the usual medications of choice in treating BDD are SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors), traditionally used in treating depression and anxiety, which are also common in BDD patients,” she says. ■

Do you have Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD)?		
1. Are there any parts of your body that you feel are unattractive or ugly?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you find yourself thinking excessively about your unattractiveness?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you compare the unattractiveness of your body part with the same body part or parts of others?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you regularly check your unattractiveness in the mirror in the hope that it may look better?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you ask others about your unattractiveness?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Do you use makeup to minimise displaying to others the part of your body that you feel is unattractive?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do you camouflage any parts of your body that you feel are unattractive?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Is your life compromised by concerns with your appearance?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If you answered YES to most of the above questions, you may have Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD)		

Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD)  
– Fear of Imagined Ugliness

## BODY DYSMORPHIC DISORDER SELF TEST



# Borna Medical Spa Laser Centre

Dear NewYou readers,

This is a letter to inform you about our new, fully licensed Medical Spa and Laser Centre introducing a range of FDA-approved, innovative skin care services to suit diverse budgets and conditions. Our aim is to assist you in making an informed choice in this rapidly evolving sphere and to partner with you in managing your aesthetic and rejuvenation requirements successfully. Our professional tailor-made treatments are geared for effective and safe results.

## Where beauty meets science

Borna Medical Spa Laser Centre is a new and modern facility located in 2nd December Road Jumeira 1, Dubai (previously in Al Dhiyafah Road). With an on-site Dermatologist onboard, Dr. Marwa El Badawy, who boasts more than 15 years experience in the field of Aesthetics, skin care, laser therapy, and head-to-toe beautification; her experience across various elements of the rejuvenation field is a valuable asset to those seeking safe and affordable anti-ageing solutions.

## The journey starts with a complimentary consultation for all procedures...

Although most medical spas offer similar services, all equipment and technicians are not created equal. Here at Borna Medical Spa Laser Centre, we offer our clients the advantage of new and superior technology in addition to an extremely knowledgeable and accommodating staff.

When it comes to laser treatments, we have several options for skin rejuvenation carried out by Afsaneh Roothparvar, our Boston University certified laser specialist, who determines which laser is best suited for each individual. In addition to an effective procedure utilising a safe beam that results in smoother, brighter and younger skin in three to five sessions, **we have the state-of-the-art Gentlase and Light Sheer Laser for permanent Laser Hair Removal.**

At Borna Medical Spa Laser Centre Dr. Marwa corroborates with Afsaneh on treatments such as non-surgical face lift, mesotherapy, micro-dermabrasion, chemical peels, facials, Derma fillers, milia extraction and cavitations Ultrasound body sculpting.

We also carry out facials and custom peels which include deep pore cleansing, professional treatments, and masks of varying types.

## The 3-day grand opening celebration

### Details

During the 3-day grand opening celebration BORNA Medical Spa Laser center will be giving away thousands of Dirhams worth of laser treatments to the community and demonstrating the latest high-tech procedures.

### You DO NOT want to miss this event

#### When

Friday, Oct 21 4:00pm-9:00pm  
Saturday, Oct 22 10:00am-9:00pm  
Sunday, Oct 23 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

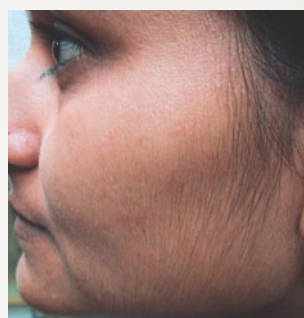


Dr. Marwa (Dermatologist), Afsaneh Rohparvar, (Laser technician), and Dr. Mir, (Managing Director)

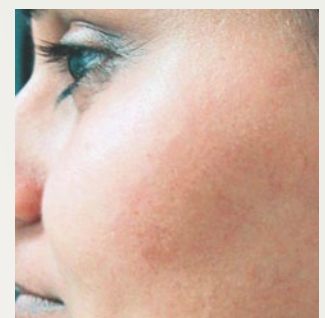


Afsaneh Rohparvar, Laser technician

## Treatments



Before



After



"Your face is your unique canvas for the world to see, so love your skin and always take care of it. Just as your teeth need professional cleaning, there are 20,000 pores on your face so monthly maintenance facials are essential for healthy skin."

**Location:** No.103, Jumeira Terrace building, Jumeira 1, Dubai, U.A.E:

RSVP to Afsaneh by emailing her at: [bornalasercenter@gmail.com](mailto:bornalasercenter@gmail.com)

Tel 04 388 9662 [www.facebook.com/borna.lasermedspa](http://www.facebook.com/borna.lasermedspa).