

LABIAPLASTY: A SURVEY OF GP EXPERIENCE EXPLORING FACTORS LEADING TO INCREASED REQUESTS AMONGST WOMEN AND GIRLS.

Simonis M^{1,2}, Manocha R^{3,4}, Ong J^{5,6}

¹Department of General Practice, University of Melbourne, Carlton, Victoria, Australia, ²Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Expert Committee Quality Care, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, ³Sydney Medical School Northern, The University of Sydney, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, ⁴Academic Department of Psychiatry, Kolling Institute, Northern Sydney Local Health District, St Leonards, New South Wales, Australia, ⁵Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, Australia, ⁶Melbourne Sexual Health Centre, Carlton, Victoria, Australia

Background: The increased requests for female genital cosmetic surgery (FGCS) by women has increased 3 fold in Australia and 5 fold in the UK for the 10 year period 2003 – 2013 without concomitant rise in genital disease. Similarly, the request for labiaplasty in USA increased by 44% in 2013 and a further 16 % in 2014. In Australia, GPs are often asked by patients regarding genital normality and this survey of GP experience, provides new insights into psychosocial factors associated with labiaplasty requests.

Methods: A national online survey of GPs was conducted for the 10-week period, starting 1 week prior and 2 months after a Women's Health seminar was held in Perth on 8 August 2015. 31 questions prompted GPs' knowledge, attitudes and practice in managing patients asking about FGCS.

Results: The survey was fully completed by 443 GPs; 54% had seen patients requesting FGCS. Overall, 75% (95% CI 71% to 79%) of GPs rated their knowledge of FGCS as inadequate and 97% (95% CI 94% to 99%) had been asked by women of all ages about genital normality. Of those who had seen patients requesting FGCS, nearly half (44%, 95% CI 38% to 51%) reported they had insufficient knowledge of risks of FGCS procedures and 35% (95% CI 29% to 41%) reported seeing females younger than 18 years of age requesting FGCS. Just over half (56%, 95% CI 51% to 60%) of the GPs felt that women should be counselled before making a referral for FGCS. More than half the GPs suspected psychological disturbances in their patients requesting FGCS such as depression, anxiety, relationship difficulties and body dysmorphic disorder.

Conclusion: GPs see women of all ages presenting with genital anatomy concerns and in those who request FGCS, GPs often suspected a range of mental health difficulties. GPs require greater education to support their patients who request FGCS.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: MS is on the RACGP Expert Committee of Quality Care and in 2015, authored the RACGP guide on FGCS titled, 'Female genital cosmetic surgery: a resource for general practitioners and other health professionals'; she has also participated in the development of FGCS guidelines for GPs.

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