Adolescent Girls’ Expectations of Reconstructive Surgery for Cleft Lip or Palate

This study sought understanding of adolescents girls’ experiences living with a facial anomaly and their expectations and hopes for orthognathic surgery. It was published in the March issue of the Cleft Palate–Craniofacial Journal.

Lawrence, KS (PRWEB) March 14, 2013 -- Cleft Palate–Craniofacial Journal – Appearance is important to adolescents. Those with a facial difference, such cleft lip or palate, can experience teasing, bullying, and stares. This often creates a struggle to ignore negative social attitudes and build a positive view of oneself. Some look to reconstructive surgery to reduce the social stigma.

Cleft Palate–Craniofacial Journal explored the experiences of adolescent girls with cleft lip and palate who were preparing for orthognathic surgery. Seven girls, ages 15 to 20, were interviewed in two one-hour sessions prior to surgery at a pediatric hospital in central Canada. Because cleft-related orthognathic surgery is not performed until a person has reached skeletal maturity, adolescents can spend years anticipating this surgery.

This study sought understanding of adolescents girls’ experiences living with a facial anomaly and their expectations and hopes for orthognathic surgery. Some of the study participants talked about being less social to lessen the potential hurt of rejection by others. Most were hopeful that the surgery would increase their confidence level.

Those with cleft lip or palate can vacillate between feeling different from others yet liking themselves as they are. Some are more successful at restructuring their mindset and discounting what their peers may think about them, while some find it difficult not to worry about the perceptions of others. These girls turned to surgery, expressing a desire for a less visible difference. “I just want to look normal,” one said.

Another related her dream of becoming a singer. Rather than having worries about talent and opportunity, her focus was on appearance. She had always wondered if she would be accepted as a performer because of her facial difference. “Would people like me because I have a scar?” she asked.

Despite the challenges that living with cleft lip or palate presents, there is a growing recognition of positive experiences. People may develop higher levels of coping skills and self-esteem to counter their anomaly. Many report sensitivity toward others and the ability to help others because of their own struggles with stigma. Those with cleft lip or palate can develop a resiliency that will serve them well in life.


About Cleft Palate–Craniofacial Journal
The official publication of the American Cleft Palate–Craniofacial Association (ACPA), the Cleft Palate–Craniofacial Journal is a bimonthly international, interdisciplinary journal on craniofacial anomalies. The journal explores and reports on the study and treatment, including experimental and proven surgical procedures, of cleft lip/palate and craniofacial anomalies. It also keeps readers in touch with the latest research in related laboratory sciences. To learn more about the society, please visit: http://www.acpa-cpf.org/.
Contact Information
Bridget Lamb
Allen Press, Inc.
http://www.allenpress.com
785-843-1234 Ext: 248

Online Web 2.0 Version
You can read the online version of this press release here.