

PROJECT DOLLY
2025

PROJECT-DOLLY.COM

Plastic Surgery South Korea

THE GREY AREA



Tradition and Innovation

Korean culture has historically advocated for physiognomy; the notion that faces suggest personality and fate. This belief, which dates back centuries, established early notions that beauty was not merely skin deep but intrinsically linked to one's fate. Over time, Confucian ideals, emphasizing conformity and collectivism, reinforced a cultural expectation for uniformity in appearance. In such an environment, subtle facial modifications (bleaching, skincare, and other methods) were seen as a way to align with these ideals.

Bioengineering in South Korea is championed not merely as a way to ensure proper medical choices, but also as a state enterprise for national advancement and global supremacy. Consequently, South Korean policymakers predict that the advancement in biotechnical fields and related industries will position the nation to shift from a production and export-based economy to a high-tech creative economy.

This state-led drive for innovation has resonated strongly with the people. In everyday life, high technology in aesthetics is visible in the rapid proliferation of advanced cosmetic procedures and skincare treatments. Citizens, who take pride in Korea's image as a cutting-edge center for both beauty and biomedicine.

PROJECT-DOLLY.COM





Ethical Concerns

Health concerns exist with plastic surgery. There are risks of infection, scarring, nerve damage, and anesthesia reactions. Many plastic surgery operations also require follow-up visits to assess whether the procedure worked and to prevent additional medical complications. While many surgical procedures have been professionally vetted over the years to make them safer, these aspects are important considerations for anyone who may be considering going under the knife.

Furthermore, there's an ethical concern about increasingly natural bodies. With so many celebrities and social media, the expansion of unrealistic expectations of beauty infiltrating society raises concern about those who might want to change their bodies for a particular popularity factor over the acknowledgment of the natural beauty of diversity. It's an ethical concern when people, especially young people, start believing surgery is a standard requirement to feel and look good and not understand how successful they already are with their naturally diverse bodies.

Finally, plastic surgery is an ethical concern psychologically. For example, those with body dysmorphism who seek surgical intervention to fix what they believe is such a flaw may be even more disappointed with the results. When plastic surgery fails to meet the expectations of what's desired, it creates more rifts in self-esteem, or people go back for more surgeries to get it "right" the next time. Thus, when plastic surgery fails to please, it only heightens insecurities instead of relieving them.

So?

Plastic surgery in South Korea is an example of social awareness, human decision, and technological advancement at play. Although surgery comes with risks, the chance to gain socioeconomic advantages through a more "attractive" face has generated the social expectation that surgery is inevitable. Of course, this trend is not limited to South Korea; instead, it shows a global appeal to human evolution. Yet when assessing bioethical considerations, answers are not simply black and white. With technology consistently advancing and extending potentialities for physical and genetic alteration, advances complicate assessments of universal advantage, idealistic expectations, and personal agency. Ideally, ethics should ground technology in a reality check; unfortunately, they often emerge frantically and exponentially before any ethical considerations, which situates a gap that complicates socio-cultural advancement.

