

Plastic Surgeons Say Advances Help Them Maintain Ethnic Identity

As more minority patients get cosmetic procedures, a group of Albany, NY plastic surgeons say they aim to preserve cultural identity through innovative methods.

ALBANY, NY, USA, November 2, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The number of minority patients undergoing cosmetic surgery is on the rise, and physicians at The Plastic Surgery Group (www.theplasticsurgerygroup.net) in Albany, NY, say it's important for plastic surgeons to keep patients' cultural and ethnic identities at the forefront of their minds.

"There has been a lot of recent talk in the media and in the industry about how plastic surgery promotes a Westernized standard of beauty," Dr. Steven M. Lynch says. "But experienced surgeons work with patients to develop surgical plans that meet their specific goals, and that usually involves maintaining their cultural identity."

The surgeons say these issues come up frequently among their [rhinoplasty](#) patients in Albany. The number of African-American patients has increased 56% in the U.S. from 2005 to 2013, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons®. The surgeons say they've seen more patients wanting rhinoplasty procedures to refine nasal contours without compromising what they feel to be African-American characteristics.

"We can accomplish both if we use very precise, subtle techniques," Dr. Susan M. Gannon says. "For instance, a patient might want more definition in the nasal tip, and we can target that specific concern without drastically changing the overall shape."

ABC News recently followed the [case](#) of one African-American rhinoplasty patient who faced criticism from those who said she was "losing her ethnic identity," while she maintained that she was proud of her heritage and simply wanted to improve some things about her nose that bothered her.

Dr. Douglas Hargrave, another surgeon at the practice serving Albany and Saratoga Springs, says another plastic surgery procedure that often brings up these issues is blepharoplasty, or eyelid surgery. Asian-American patients, who have increased in number by 126% since 2005, commonly choose the treatment to create an upper eyelid with a crease, also called a double eyelid.

"The procedure is one of the most popular cosmetic surgeries in the world, and it's really been

on the upswing in recent years," Dr. Hargrave says. "It's a choice many Asian patients make, arguably for the same reasons others choose the procedure: to look more alert and to feel better about their appearances."

For many patients, the surgeons say, changing one feature of their faces or bodies has more to do with personal self-image than cultural identity.

"We often see patients who say they simply want to improve the look of a certain part of their body or face that's bothered them for a long time," says Dr. John Noonan, another surgeon at the practice. "It doesn't have anything to do with their ethnicity. I think we'll see more of that as demographic shifts keep happening within plastic surgery."

With numbers of minority patients continuing to rise, the surgeons say, physicians need to place more emphasis on cultural sensitivity by openly discussing these kinds of things during consultations and by educating themselves on techniques that can help.

Dr. Jeffrey Rockmore, another member of the team of Albany surgeons, says that increased awareness makes a big difference.

"I think the key here is for surgeons to educate themselves on these issues, which aren't always the easiest topics to discuss," he says. "We always treat our patients with compassion and sensitivity, and addressing things like cultural standards of beauty is a big part of the job. As long as we're acting in our patients' best interest and providing them with exceptional care and results, we will continue to feel good about the work we're doing."

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Collectively, the 6 board-certified plastic surgeons at The Plastic Surgery Group (www.theplasticsurgerygroup.net) in Albany bring more than 130 years of training and experience to patients seeking medical spa services and plastic surgery in Albany, Saratoga Springs, Clifton Park, Schenectady, and Troy. Located at 455 Patroon Creek Blvd., Suite 101, The Plastic Surgery Group believes "Confidence is Beautiful™" and is committed to providing patients with a pleasing cosmetic experience from start to finish.

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