

## EXAMINING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF COSMETIC DENTISTRY ON PATIENT SELF-ESTEEM AND QUALITY OF LIFE

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### ABSTRACT

Cosmetic dentistry has gained popularity in recent years, driven by the increasing demand for aesthetic improvements. Procedures like teeth whitening, veneers, and orthodontics are not only intended to enhance dental appearance but also to positively affect patients' self-esteem and quality of life. Psychological well-being and self-confidence are closely linked to personal appearance, particularly the smile, making cosmetic dentistry an area of significant impact. This study aims to examine the psychological impacts of cosmetic dentistry on patients' self-esteem and overall quality of life, assessing changes in confidence levels, social interaction, and mental health following aesthetic dental treatments. A cross-sectional study was conducted with 200 participants who had undergone cosmetic dental procedures, including teeth whitening, veneers, dental implants, and orthodontics. Data were collected using standardized psychological assessment tools, such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and the Oral Health Impact Profile (OHIP-14), both before and six months after treatment. Patient satisfaction was also evaluated using a 10-point Likert scale. The results were statistically analyzed using SPSS software (version 28.0), with paired t-tests and ANOVA to compare pre- and post-treatment scores. Qualitative interviews were conducted with a subset of 50 participants to explore personal experiences and subjective feelings about their post-treatment appearance. The findings revealed a statistically significant improvement in self-esteem and quality of life post-treatment ( $p < 0.05$ ). The mean RSES score increased from 18.2 ( $\pm 3.4$ ) before treatment to 24.6 ( $\pm 2.8$ ) after treatment, indicating enhanced self-confidence. Similarly, OHIP-14 scores showed a marked reduction in negative psychological and social impacts, with a pre-treatment mean score of 30.7 ( $\pm 5.2$ ), which dropped to 18.1 ( $\pm 4.5$ ) post-treatment. The majority of patients (89%) reported a high satisfaction rate (8–10 on the Likert scale), with significant improvements in social interactions and mental well-being. Cosmetic dental procedures can have a profound positive psychological impact on patients, significantly boosting their self-esteem and improving their quality of life. These findings highlight the importance of aesthetic dentistry in promoting not only oral health but also mental well-being. Further studies could expand the scope by exploring long-term psychological effects and considering larger population samples.

# The Research of Medical Science Review

## INTRODUCTION

Cosmetic dentistry, encompassing procedures such as teeth whitening, veneers, dental implants, and orthodontics, has gained substantial popularity due to its ability to enhance not only dental aesthetics but also patients' psychological well-being[1]. Modern societal emphasis on appearance and the influence of social media have made a confident smile an essential attribute, often linking it to positive self-image and interpersonal success[2]. Consequently, individuals increasingly seek cosmetic dental treatments to improve their appearance, alleviate insecurities, and boost self-confidence, making the psychological impacts of these procedures a significant area of research in dentistry and psychology[3].

Studies have shown that appearance-related concerns often affect self-esteem and mental health, as individuals with perceived dental flaws may experience feelings of social isolation, low confidence, and dissatisfaction with their appearance[3]. These psychological effects can extend to other areas of life, impacting personal relationships, career opportunities, and overall quality of life[4]. Cosmetic dental treatments, by enhancing the smile, can potentially reverse these negative perceptions, promoting a stronger sense of self-worth and social ease. Research indicates that the benefits of such treatments may be more than superficial, contributing to improvements in psychological well-being and life satisfaction[5].

However, understanding the true extent of these psychological benefits requires in-depth evaluation. Psychological changes related to self-esteem and quality of life can vary widely across individuals, influenced by factors like age, gender, cultural norms, and personal expectations from the treatments[6]. Additionally, the results may be influenced by the type and extent of cosmetic procedures, the support received from family and social circles, and individual resilience. Examining these variables in a clinical context can provide valuable insights into how cosmetic dentistry affects mental health and whether it leads to sustainable improvements in patients' self-perception and life satisfaction[7].

This study aims to evaluate the psychological impacts of cosmetic dental treatments on patient self-esteem and quality of life, assessing shifts in self-confidence, mental well-being, and social

engagement post-treatment. By employing standardized psychological assessment tools, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the role cosmetic dentistry plays in shaping patients' self-image and overall happiness, highlighting its importance beyond aesthetic enhancement and toward holistic health and well-being.

## Literature Review:

Galiatsatos P(2024): Research has highlighted that patients who undergo cosmetic dental treatments, such as teeth whitening or veneers, experience improved self-confidence and social engagement. These individuals are often more willing to smile freely and participate actively in social and professional environments, which contributes to a higher quality of life[8].

Gibson C(2021): Cosmetic dentistry can improve self-perception, leading to better body image and reduced self-consciousness. This is particularly evident in patients who address long-standing insecurities, such as misalignment or discoloration, which had previously impacted their self-esteem and interpersonal relationships[9].

Zhang Q(2020): The psychological relief from cosmetic procedures also plays a significant role. For many, correcting visible dental imperfections alleviates the anxiety associated with their appearance, allowing them to feel at ease in social situations and reducing stress levels[10].

Holden ACL(2018): Studies show that cosmetic dental procedures can influence how individuals are perceived professionally. A healthy, attractive smile is often associated with attributes like competence and reliability, which can impact career success and workplace confidence[11].

Josefsson E(2009): Enhanced dental aesthetics contribute to positive mental health outcomes, as improvements in one's smile boost feelings of self-worth and satisfaction. This is linked to a reduction in depression and social withdrawal among patients who were previously embarrassed by their smiles[12].

Stofman G(2006): People who undergo cosmetic procedures report increased comfort in building relationships. This is partly due to the fact that a smile serves as a universal sign of openness and

# The Research of Medical Science Review

trustworthiness, which can foster connections and improve relationship satisfaction[13].

Settineri S(2015): Enhanced dental aesthetics are directly correlated with higher self-esteem, making individuals more inclined to engage in various activities and maintain an active lifestyle. The psychological benefits of these improvements tend to have a long-term effect on the quality of life[14]. Brown WT(2001): Some studies highlight the transformative long-term impact of cosmetic dentistry, as patients who are satisfied with their dental appearance maintain improved self-image and confidence, sustaining a positive life outlook [15].

Buser D(2004): Procedures that enhance smile aesthetics not only benefit the individual but also impact how others perceive them. Research indicates that patients with bright, healthy smiles are often viewed as more attractive and approachable[16].

Nielsen D(2012): Studies reflect that the impact of cosmetic dentistry is comprehensive, affecting everything from self-confidence to professional and social relationships, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of life[17].

## Materials and Methods:

### Study Design:

This study was designed as a cross-sectional analysis with a longitudinal follow-up period of six months to assess changes in self-esteem and quality of life in patients following cosmetic dental treatments. A cross-sectional approach was initially implemented to gather baseline data on participants' psychological states before undergoing cosmetic dental procedures[18]. This was followed by a six-month follow-up, allowing researchers to observe and quantify changes over time, which provided insight into both the immediate and enduring psychological impacts of these treatments.

### Participants:

A total of 200 participants, aged 18 to 60, who had undergone cosmetic dental treatments such as teeth whitening, veneers, dental implants, and orthodontic adjustments, were recruited from both private and public dental clinics, ensuring a socio-economically diverse sample[19]. Participants were selected based on their recent experience

(within the past year) with cosmetic procedures to allow accurate assessment of psychological impacts on self-esteem and quality of life. Inclusion criteria required participants to be adults fluent in the survey language, while exclusion criteria omitted individuals with untreated mental health conditions or a history of psychological treatment related to body dysmorphia to avoid confounding variables. These criteria helped create a focused participant pool for assessing the psychological impacts of cosmetic dentistry with precision and reliability[20].

### Data Collection:

Data collection for this study utilized multiple tools to comprehensively assess the psychological impacts of cosmetic dentistry on self-esteem and quality of life. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was administered to measure changes in self-esteem levels before and after treatment, providing a quantitative assessment of personal confidence[21]. The Oral Health Impact Profile (OHIP-14) was used as a validated tool to capture the quality of life aspects specifically related to oral health, with a focus on the psychological and social effects of cosmetic dental improvements. To gauge overall satisfaction with cosmetic outcomes, participants rated their satisfaction on a 10-point Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software version 28.0, which facilitated statistical comparisons between pre- and post-treatment scores, including paired t-tests and ANOVA to assess the significance of changes. Additionally, qualitative data obtained through post-treatment interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis using NVivo software (version 12), enabling in-depth exploration of patient experiences and subjective responses related to self-esteem, social confidence, and quality of life[22].

### Statistical Analysis:

The statistical analysis for this study utilized several methods to rigorously evaluate the psychological impact of cosmetic dentistry on self-esteem and quality of life[23]. Paired t-tests were conducted to compare patients' self-esteem and quality-of-life scores before and after treatment, allowing for assessment of significant changes in these metrics following cosmetic dental

# The Research of Medical Science Review

procedures. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to analyze variations in psychological outcomes across different types of cosmetic treatments, such as veneers, teeth whitening, and orthodontics, identifying if specific procedures yielded distinct psychological benefits[24]. A p-value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant for all tests, ensuring robust interpretation of results, with SPSS software

(version 28.0) facilitating precise data management and analysis[24].

## Results:

The following tables provide a comprehensive view of the study's findings on the psychological impacts of cosmetic dentistry on patient self-esteem and quality of life. The results are organized into key areas of assessment, with specific metrics for each category:

**Table 1: Baseline vs. Post-Treatment Self-Esteem Scores (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale)**

Measure	Baseline (Pre-Treatment) Mean ± SD	Post-Treatment (6 Months) Mean ± SD	p-value
Self-Esteem Score	18.2 ± 3.4	24.6 ± 2.8	0.001

**Table 2: Baseline vs. Post-Treatment Quality of Life Scores (OHIP-14)**

Measure	Baseline Mean ± SD	Post-Treatment Mean ± SD	p-value
Psychological Discomfort	7.4 ± 1.8	3.2 ± 1.1	0.001
Social Disability	5.6 ± 1.5	2.4 ± 1.0	0.001
Functional Limitation	6.1 ± 1.7	2.8 ± 1.2	0.001
Total OHIP-14 Score	30.7 ± 5.2	18.1 ± 4.5	0.001

**Table 3: Self-Esteem and Quality of Life Improvements by Procedure Type (ANOVA)**

Cosmetic Procedure	Mean Self-Esteem Improvement	Mean Quality of Life Improvement	p-value (ANOVA)
Teeth Whitening	+5.1	+6.4	0.05
Veneers	+7.2	+8.1	0.05
Dental Implants	+6.5	+7.3	0.05
Orthodontics	+5.9	+6.9	0.05

**Table 4: Patient Satisfaction with Cosmetic Outcomes (Likert Scale)**

Satisfaction Rating	Percentage of Participants (%)
10 (Highly Satisfied)	45%
8–9	44%
6–7	8%
Below 5	3%

# The Research of Medical Science Review

## Discussion

The results demonstrated a substantial improvement in both self-esteem and quality of life following cosmetic dental treatments, confirming the positive psychological impact of these procedures[25]. Table 1 highlights a significant increase in self-esteem scores, as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale ( $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that patients experienced meaningful gains in self-confidence, likely due to enhanced satisfaction with their appearance. Similarly, Table 2 shows considerable reductions in OHIP-14 scores, particularly in areas related to psychological discomfort, social disability, and functional limitations ( $p < 0.001$  across all metrics). These improvements emphasize that the cosmetic enhancements provided not only aesthetic benefits but also facilitated improved social interaction and reduced psychological distress[26].

An analysis across different types of cosmetic procedures, shown in Table 3, revealed that while all treatments led to positive outcomes, veneers and dental implants provided the highest boosts in both self-esteem and quality of life, with mean improvements of +7.2 and +8.1, respectively, in self-esteem and quality-of-life scores[27]. The significant p-values ( $p < 0.05$ ) indicate that specific treatments may have distinct psychological benefits, which could guide patient choices based on desired psychological outcomes.

Furthermore, patient satisfaction, as shown in Table 4, was high, with 89% of participants rating their satisfaction between 8 and 10 on a Likert scale. This high satisfaction rate aligns with the observed improvements in psychological metrics, reinforcing the idea that cosmetic dental procedures can have lasting positive effects on patients' mental well-being and overall life satisfaction[27].

## Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the profound positive impact of cosmetic dentistry on patient self-esteem and quality of life. The findings reveal significant increases in self-confidence and reduced psychological discomfort and social limitations post-treatment, as evidenced by the enhanced Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and OHIP-14 scores. Patients who underwent procedures such

as veneers, dental implants, and teeth whitening reported higher satisfaction with their appearance, leading to greater social interaction and mental well-being. With 89% of participants expressing high satisfaction levels, this research highlights the potential of aesthetic dental treatments to improve not only oral health but also holistic mental health, reinforcing the role of cosmetic dentistry in enhancing both physical and psychological quality of life.

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