



# The role of genital cosmetic surgery in women's sexual health, international guidelines and care recommendations

## Kadın cinsel sağlığında genital estetik cerrahinin rolü, uluslararası rehberler ve bakım önerileri

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### ABSTRACT

Female genital cosmetic surgery refers to procedures aimed at improving body image, sexual health, and quality of life. Social media, cultural norms, and body image shape women's perceptions of the appearance of their genital organs and play a significant role in their decision to undergo cosmetic surgery. The reasons women seek genital cosmetic surgery include dissatisfaction with the appearance of their genital organs, sexual dissatisfaction, and sexual dysfunction. Surgical procedures performed for genital Cosmetic purposes increase women's sexual function, sexual satisfaction, and self-esteem, but they also carry certain potential risks and complications. Sexual dysfunction associated with complications such as infection, hematoma, and asymmetry that may develop due to surgical procedures may increase and negatively affect women's physical and psychological health. Therefore, before deciding on genital cosmetic surgery, women should be thoroughly evaluated both physically and psychologically. This review article aims to contribute to the literature by evaluating the effects of genital Cosmetic surgery on women's sexual health in line with current studies and guidelines, with the goal of positively impacting women's health.

### ÖZ

Kadın genital estetik cerrahisi, beden imajı, cinsel sağlık ve yaşam kalitesini iyileştirmeyi hedefleyen müdahalelerdir. Sosyal medya, kültürel normlar ve beden imajı, kadınların genital organlarının görünümüne yönelik algılarını şekillendirip, estetik cerrahiyi tercih etmelerinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Kadınların genital estetik cerrahiye başvurma nedenleri arasında genital organlarının görünümünden memnuniyetsizlik, cinsel tatminsizlik ve cinsel işlev bozuklukları yer almaktadır. Genital estetik amaçlı uygulanan cerrahi işlemler kadınların cinsel işlev, cinsel tatmin ve özsaygı düzeylerini artırmakla birlikte bazı potansiyel riskleri ve komplikasyonları da bulunmaktadır. Cerrahi işleme bağlı gelişebilen enfeksiyon, hematoma, asimetri gibi komplikasyonlara bağlı cinsel işlev bozuklukları artabilir ve kadınların fiziksel ve psikolojik sağlığını olumsuz yönde etkilebilir. Bu nedenle, genital estetik cerrahi kararı verilmeden önce, kadınlar fiziksel ve psikolojik olarak kapsamlı şekilde değerlendirilmelidir. Bu derleme makalede, genital estetik cerrahi işlemlerinin kadın cinsel sağlığı üzerine etkileri mevcut çalışmalar ve rehberler doğrultusunda değerlendirilerek kadın sağlığını olumlu yönde etkileyecek kapsamda literatüre katkı sağlanması hedeflenmiştir.

### Key Words:

Women's Health, Sexual Health, Genital Cosmetic Surgery

### Anahtar Kelimeler:

Kadın Sağlığı, Cinsel Sağlık, Genital Estetik Cerrahi

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The concept of aesthetics in the field of medicine is defined as methods applied to correct or beautify a defective organ (Hadımlı et al., 2021). According to the 2024 report published by The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS), the total number of surgical and non-surgical procedures performed globally in the field of aesthetics has increased by 40% compared to 2020 (ISAPS, 2024). When examining the gender differences among individuals who resort to Cosmetic procedures, it is observed that women are more inclined to do so than men. Women's greater inclination toward aesthetics is explained by changes in societal perceptions of beauty and individual expectations. Cosmetic surgery essentially improves individuals' quality of life by altering their body image (Hadımlı et al., 2021). One of the Cosmetic surgical procedures performed for this purpose is female genital Cosmetic surgery (Barut et al., 2024). According to the ISAPS 2024 report, approximately 2.1% of all aesthetic surgical procedures performed worldwide are genital aesthetic surgeries. Labiaplasty accounts for the largest share within this group. 48.4% of external genital surgeries were performed primarily on individuals aged 18–34 (ISAPS, 2024). When examining the annual increase, the ISAPS 2023 report states that the total number of genital aesthetic procedures was 273,553 (labiaplasty and vaginal rejuvenation). In contrast, the ISAPS 2024 report shows that this number has risen to 286,352, indicating an increase of 12,799 in the number of genital cosmetic procedures within one year (ISAPS, 2023; ISAPS, 2024). Genital Cosmetic surgery can increase women's physical, sexual, and psychological satisfaction, improving their body image perception and contributing to an improved quality of life (Barut et al., 2024).

These methods, which are applied to change the appearance of the genital organs, involve procedures to enlarge, reduce, or reshape the anatomical structure of the organs. Most of these interventions are performed for cosmetic reasons without medical indication, although in some cases (e.g., labiaplasty for congenital anomalies or labial asymmetry/hypertrophy due to excessive androgen exposure) they may become necessary (Barbara et al., 2015; Ekrami et al., 2018; Desai and Dixit, 2018; Gonzales-Alabastro et al., 2019)

In addition to Cosmetic concerns, functional issues also contribute to the increasing demand for genital cosmetic surgery among women. Changes in the structure and appearance of the perineum may occur due to tissue expansion and weakening of the pelvic floor muscles during physiological processes such as pregnancy, vaginal delivery, and menopause (Alavi-Arjas et al., 2025). These adverse changes can lead to functional problems such as friction, itching, hygiene issues, dyspareunia (painful sexual intercourse), pain during exercise, a pulling sensation, contact with underwear, recurrent urinary tract infections, and deviations in urine flow (Alavi-Arjas et al., 2023). In addition to these problems, it also has negative effects on self-esteem, sexual function, and overall health (Goodman et al., 2016). Women may also turn to genital cosmetic surgery to resolve such issues (Desai and Dixit, 2018). In a prospective study conducted with women who underwent colpo-perineoplasty for vaginal laxity complaints, improvement was reported in all areas of sexual function on the FSFI (Female Sexual Function Index) scale 18 months after surgery (Jamali et al., 2022). Similarly, Desai and Dixit's (2018) study found that women's average FSFI scores increased after labiaplasty (Desai and Dixit, 2018). These results indicate that genital cosmetic surgery procedures have positive effects on female sexual function.

Many of the procedures performed were initially used to repair episiotomy scars, excise tumors, and treat conditions such as urinary incontinence, but later developed into genital cosmetic surgery (Hadımlı et al., 2021). The goals of genital cosmetic surgery are as follows: symmetrical

labia minora that do not extend beyond the labia majora, a clitoris head with minimal folds, no protrusions, and a short length, full labia majora, the provision of vaginal sensations during sexual intercourse, and a vaginally positioned vagina with no sagging skin in the perineum (Ekrami et al., 2018). Procedures performed in line with these objectives include various applications such as perineoplasty, vaginoplasty, vaginal rejuvenation, labiaplasty, Gräfenberg (G) spot enlargement, and clitoroplasty (Table 1) (Hadımlı et al., 2021; Desai and Dixit, 2018; Gonzales-Alabastro et al., 2019; Alavi-Arjas et al., 2023)

## METHOD

This study is a non-systematic (narrative) review of the literature examining the effects of female genital cosmetic surgery on women's body image, self-esteem, and sexual health. The literature search was conducted using PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and relevant national databases. The review included Turkish and English national and international scientific studies published between 2014 and 2025, with full-text access available. The keywords "female genital cosmetic surgery," "genital aesthetic surgery," "sexual health," "sexual function," "body image," "self-esteem," "labiaplasty," "vaginoplasty," and "genital cosmetic procedures" were used in both Turkish and English during the search process. Systematic reviews and meta-analyses, cross-sectional and case-control studies, qualitative studies, clinical guidelines, and expert opinions found in the literature were evaluated. The findings obtained were presented within a comprehensive framework under the headings of reasons for women's inclination towards genital cosmetic surgery, the relationship between genital cosmetic surgery and sexual health, the risks and possible complications of surgical interventions, recommendations in international guidelines, and care and counseling approaches for women undergoing genital cosmetic surgery.

**Table 1.** Genital Cosmetic Surgery Procedures

Perineoplasty	It is a procedure that involves lifting and reconstructing the muscles and connective tissues between the vaginal opening and the anus. This procedure is preferred for the symptomatic treatment of vaginismus, dyspareunia, genital warts, perineal infection, and congenital perineal defects, as well as to increase sexual satisfaction and reduce postpartum perineal deformities.
Vaginoplasty	Vaginal laxity or widening is a condition that causes decreased vaginal sensitivity in women. Surgical interventions are performed to prevent this condition by widening or narrowing the vaginal vestibule. In addition to being performed to repair the genital organs after childbirth and restore them to their former functional state, it is also performed for purely Cosmetic reasons. Repairing the laxity in the vaginal wall eliminates the condition that increases friction, dryness, and the risk of infection, and reduces sexual sensation.
Vaginal Rejuvenation	It is a procedure that involves narrowing the diameter of the vaginal canal. It is a procedure that is mostly performed when the vaginal tissues weaken after a difficult delivery. It is also used in women with vaginal tissue damage such as incontinence and menopausal vaginal atrophy.
Labiaplasty	It is a surgical procedure used in the treatment of labial hypertrophy, involving the reconstruction of the labia minora. Labial hypertrophy can cause problems such as psychological distress in women, as well as irritation from wearing tight clothing, difficulties during sexual intercourse, and discomfort during physical activities such as cycling. Labial reduction is used for various reasons, including sexual development disorders, estrogen or androgen treatment during childhood, repeated pulling of the labial tissues, or infections.
G-Spot (Gräfenberg spot) Amplification	It is the procedure of injecting a filler material composed of collagen or hyaluronic acid into the erogenous zone located on the front wall of the vagina under local anesthesia. This procedure aims to increase the size, tightness, and sensitivity of the G-spot. Following the procedure, an increase in sexual sensation and orgasm frequency is expected. The procedure, whose effects last up to two years, must be repeated. The procedure is indicated for improving the quality of sexual life in women experiencing orgasm difficulties and sexual dissatisfaction atrophy.
Clitoroplasty	Clitoroplasty is a surgical procedure that aims to reduce the hypertrophic appearance of the skin fold covering the clitoris. Clitoral hypertrophy can occur due to genetic disorders, disorders in sexual development, and hormonal disorders. This problem can cause clitoral insensitivity during sexual intercourse, hygiene issues, and an unpleasant odor due to the accumulation of bodily fluids (such as mucus and urine) in the clitoral spaces. Additionally, an enlarged appearance can affect a woman's body image, causing her to feel masculine and leading to a decrease in her attractiveness or sexual pleasure. Women seek clitoroplasty to address both Cosmetic and functional concerns.

References: Hadımlı et al., 2021; Wiśniewska-Ślepaczuk et al., 2021.

## **Reasons Women Choose Genital Cosmetic Surgery**

Sexuality is an important aspect of a woman's physical and psychological health (Al Salehi et al., 2023) and is a determinant of her quality of life and satisfaction (Erdoğan, 2021). Female sexual function is influenced by biological, environmental, physical, and psychosocial factors. These factors can cause various sexual dysfunctions (Erdoğan, 2021). Women seek genital cosmetic surgery due to cosmetic concerns in the genital area, the influence of the media, achieving sexual satisfaction, cultural factors, and sexual dysfunction (Alavi-Arjas et al., 2023).

Social media is a frequently used platform accessible to everyone and plays an important role in shaping women's Cosmetic perceptions. Content shared on social media platforms affects women's body image perception, increasing their cosmetic concerns (Çakır, 2020). In addition to social media, easy access to pornographic films and images creates the perception that women's genital organs should have a certain appearance and establishes ideal genital body image norms (Barbara et al., 2015; Desai and Dixit, 2018). In a study conducted by Sharp and colleagues (2016) in Australia, it was reported that women seeking labiaplasty were exposed to more online genital organ images and labiaplasty advertisements than women in the control group (Sharp et al., 2016). A systematic review found a relationship between the frequency of exposure to pornography and a negative perception of the sexual body image (Paslakis et al., 2022).

When women feel anxious about the appearance of their genital organs, they try to find information online (Erdoğan et al., 2022). Women who feel they do not have the standardized genital appearance they see online believe their sexual organs are "abnormal" and consequently believe their sexual function is weak (Barbara et al., 2015). This situation increases women's desire for genital cosmetic surgery; the increase in the number of advertisements related to genital cosmetic surgery on the internet and easier access to these services increase the demand for achieving a "normal" genital appearance (Barbara et al., 2015; Desai and Dixit, 2018). Furthermore, easier access to social media increases demand for cosmetic procedures from an early age. The prevalence of social media use, particularly among young people, can create an idealized perception of beauty that leads to dissatisfaction with one's body image (Türk and Bayrakçı, 2020).

At the same time, the standardization of sexuality and its presentation as a mechanical performance also creates a norm of perfect sexual function in women. Women may therefore experience greater anxiety about sexuality and turn to genital cosmetic surgery (Gonzales-Alabastro et al., 2019). In addition, the decline in sexual taboos, the increased openness to discussing genitalia, and the widespread adoption of genital hair removal methods are also listed among the other reasons for the increase in demand for these procedures (Ekrami et al., 2018; Alavi-Arjas et al., 2023).

## **The Relationship Between Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery and Sexual Health**

Sexual health, an integral part of a woman's overall health and quality of life, is affected not only by physical and environmental issues but also by psychological factors such as self-esteem, relationship with partner, depression, and body image (Barbara et al., 2015). The term body image refers to the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of an individual's response to their perceived physical condition. Individuals' increasing concerns about their body image are driving interest in Cosmetic procedures (Caltekin and Hamlaci Baskaya, 2025). Women perceive physical appearance as an integral part of sexuality. Women who are dissatisfied with their genital appearance experience anxiety during sexual intercourse due to feelings of shame,

lack of self-confidence, and fear of potential negative thoughts in their partner (Hadımlı et al., 2021; Goodman et al., 2016; Caltekin and Hamlaci Baskaya, 2025; Daşıkan et al., 2019)

A positive genital body image contributes to a better and more satisfying sex life by increasing sexual self-esteem (Eftekhar et al., 2021). Women interested in genital cosmetic surgery are generally dissatisfied with their body image and, as a result, have low levels of sexual pleasure. After genital cosmetic surgery, women's satisfaction with the new appearance of their genital organs improves body image and increases sexual pleasure (Barbara et al., 2015; Eftekhar et al., 2021). Ekrami and colleagues (2018) reported that women who desired genital cosmetic surgery were less satisfied with their bodies than women who did not desire such surgery (Ekrami et al., 2018). In a study conducted by Goodman and colleagues (2016) with women after cosmetic surgery, differences in body image and genital self-image disappeared and sexual satisfaction improved significantly (Goodman et al., 2016). Similarly, in the study by Eftekhar and colleagues (2021), it was reported that women who sought genital cosmetic surgery experienced significant improvements in body image and sexual function after surgery (Eftekhar et al., 2021). A systematic review and meta-analysis examining the effect of female genital cosmetic and reconstructive procedures on body and genital self-image reported that the procedures significantly increased Genital Appearance Satisfaction Scale scores (by 17.96%) (Alavi-Arjas et al., 2023). Inadequate body image perception negatively affects women's psychological health. Women who desire genital cosmetic surgery have been reported to have a higher likelihood of emotional disorders, eating disorders, and alcohol use compared to women who are not interested in such procedures. This situation negatively affects sexuality (Paslakis et al., 2022; Eftekhar et al., 2021; Al-Jumah et al., 2020)

One of the key factors related to women's satisfaction with their genital organs is sexual satisfaction. In this context, it can be stated that there is a direct relationship between sexual satisfaction and genital body image (Barbara et al., 2015; Goodman et al., 2016). Most women who seek genital aesthetics aim to achieve sexual satisfaction (Erdođan et al., 2022). Women who undergo cosmetic surgery due to sexual dissatisfaction experience an improvement in their genital body image and an increase in their level of sexual satisfaction (Al-Jumah et al., 2020). In a study conducted with women who underwent various genital cosmetic procedures, the most common reasons reported for requesting the procedure were dissatisfaction with genital appearance and decreased satisfaction during sexual intimacy (Ekrami et al., 2018). In a study conducted with women who underwent vaginoplasty, it was reported that after the procedure, the Golombok-Rust Sexual Satisfaction Scale subdimensions of communication, satisfaction, and orgasm increased, while the subdimensions of avoidance and vaginismus decreased (Erdođan, 2021). These findings reveal that genital cosmetic surgery procedures increase levels of sexual satisfaction.

There is a strong link between the appearance and function of the genital organs, self-perception, self-esteem, and health. This link also directly affects sexual health (Magon and Alinsod, 2017). Women seek genital cosmetic surgery to increase their self-esteem, and it has been noted that the positive changes in genital body image resulting from these surgical interventions also positively increase self-esteem (Erdođan et al., 2022; Sharp et al., 2020). A systematic review and meta-analysis study reported that labiaplasty in particular has a positive effect on women's self-esteem (Sharp et al., 2020). In a study conducted with married Turkish women who underwent

vaginoplasty surgery, it was found that the post-operative intervention group had higher self-esteem and sexual satisfaction (Erdoğan et al., 2022). A cross-sectional study conducted in Saudi Arabia reported a significant improvement in self-esteem among women who underwent genital cosmetic surgery (Al-Jumah et al., 2020). Self-esteem and body image appear to have a significant impact on women's decision to undergo genital cosmetic surgery. The study results indicate that genital cosmetic surgery procedures may increase women's self-esteem and sexual satisfaction.

Women's body image and Cosmetic expectations are shaped by social norms and cultural dynamics. In particular, the influence of the media and social environment increases women's interest in cosmetic procedures. Women seek various surgical procedures to feel better about themselves (Daşikan et al., 2019). Another reason for requesting genital cosmetic surgery is thought to stem from patriarchal culture and the pressure on women to please their husbands. As a result, women are increasingly seeking any means that can help them look beautiful (Eftekhar et al., 2021). In the study by Eftekhar and colleagues (2021), 58.7% of women reported wanting surgery due to their partner's sexual dissatisfaction (Eftekhar et al., 2021). In a survey study, 42% of 2,403 men stated that they were familiar with vulva and labiaplasty procedures, but 75% stated that they would not encourage their partners to change their genital appearance (Mazloomdoost et al., 2015). Genital Cosmetic surgeries aim to improve body image, sexual satisfaction and function, as well as sexual health, including marital relationships (Barbara et al., 2015; Eftekhar et al., 2021). However, studies show that while women resort to these methods to influence their partners, most men do not support genital Cosmetic surgery and are reluctant to accept such changes.

### **Risks of Genital Cosmetic Surgery**

Genital cosmetic surgery procedures have many positive effects on sexual health, but the effectiveness of these procedures has not been proven (Gonzales-Alabastro et al., 2019). According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Committee Opinion (2020) report, there is insufficient scientific evidence regarding the safety and effectiveness of such procedures (ACOG, 2020). Therefore, the potential for harm from these procedures should always be considered (Gonzales-Alabastro et al., 2019). Serious complications such as infection, hematoma, asymmetry, wound dehiscence, urinary retention, skin retraction, dyspareunia, incomplete wound healing, and bowel or bladder damage caused by fistula formation may occur after genital cosmetic surgery (Barbara et al., 2015; Eftekhar et al., 2021). These developing complications may increase the severity of sexual dysfunction physically, emotionally, and psychologically, rather than correcting it (Barbara et al., 2015). Complications experienced after genital cosmetic surgery may cause sexual problems and negative perceptions of body image, rather than increasing the woman's sexual satisfaction.

### **Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery and Recommendations from International Guidelines**

With the increasing preference for and application of genital cosmetic surgery in recent years, international obstetrics and gynecology associations have published recommendations on the subject. These recommendations are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery and Recommendations from International Guidelines

Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists	<p>Women should be informed about normal anatomical changes in female genital organs, and counseling and appropriate psychological interventions should be provided for the management of psychosocial issues such as body image concerns.</p> <p>Since genital development does not occur before the age of 18, genital cosmetic surgery should not be performed on women and girls under the age of 18, regardless of consent.</p> <p>Patient consent forms must record details of the information provided about the treatment recommended and provided to the woman.</p> <p>Advertisements for female genital cosmetic surgery procedures must comply with good medical practice standards and be subject to regulations established by the institutions that set advertising standards.</p>
American Collage of Obstetricians and Gynecologist	<p>Women should be informed that genital cosmetic surgery is not medically indicated, that there are risks involved, and that there is insufficient information regarding its safety and effectiveness.</p> <p>Women should be informed that there is insufficient evidence supporting the effectiveness of genital cosmetic surgery and about the potential complications that may arise following surgical intervention.</p> <p>Obstetricians should have adequate training in recognizing psychiatric disorders and, if necessary, should be referred for evaluation before making a decision to operate. If indicated, an evaluation for body dysmorphic disorder should be performed.</p> <p>The obstetrician should explain to the woman that genital organs can vary from person to person and can be affected by hormonal changes.</p> <p>Obstetricians and gynecologists should inform their patients about their experiences and surgical outcomes prior to genital cosmetic surgery.</p> <p>Advertisements must be accurate and not misleading. Existing surgical procedures should not be renamed and promoted as new cosmetic vaginal procedures.</p>
The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada	<p>Women should be provided with information about anatomical and individual differences.</p> <p>The medical history of women seeking genital cosmetic surgery should be thoroughly reviewed, and any significant sexual or psychological dysfunction, including body dysmorphic disorder, should be ruled out.</p> <p>There is insufficient evidence that female genital cosmetic surgery improves sexual satisfaction or self-image. Women should therefore not be encouraged to undergo it.</p> <p>Providing counseling to women seeking genital cosmetic surgery is the first step.</p> <p>The unwanted complications of female genital cosmetic surgery should be included in the scope of counseling topics.</p> <p>Care should be taken to ensure that advertisements for female genital cosmetic surgery are realistic and not misleading.</p> <p>Additional expertise is required for counseling adolescents.</p> <p>Female genital cosmetic surgery should not be performed until genital maturity is reached.</p>

References: RCOG, 2015; ACOG, 2020; Shaw et al., 2022

### Care and Counseling Initiatives for Women Who Have Undergone Genital Cosmetic Surgery

Women undergoing genital cosmetic surgery should undergo a comprehensive assessment of their physical and psychosocial health prior to the procedure. It should be remembered that women's desire for cosmetic surgery may stem from psychological issues. It is important that women undergoing the procedure undergo psychological assessments in addition to physical assessments (Hadımlı et al., 2021). In a study conducted by Gören (2016) with women who underwent cosmetic surgery, it was reported that those who underwent surgery for Cosmetic reasons had higher self-esteem and body image scores than those who underwent surgery due to illness (Gören et al., 2016). Similarly, in a study examining the relationship between sexual quality of life, genital body image, and sexual function in women seeking genital cosmetic surgery, education, age, duration of marriage, genital self-image, body image, and sexual function were found to be explanatory factors. These factors account for 60% of the variance in sexual quality of life scores (Eftekhar et al., 2021). Women seeking genital cosmetic surgery require comprehensive biopsychosocial care, and it is anticipated that addressing psychological factors in particular will be effective in reducing unnecessary surgery.

Before performing genital cosmetic surgery, it is important to determine whether there is a problem in the genital area and to assess whether a non-surgical solution would be beneficial

if there is a problem (Daşıkan et al., 2019). If the problem is psychological in nature, counseling should be recommended (Gonzales-Alabastro et al., 2019). In addition, careful evaluation and counseling about possible differences in genital appearance can help resolve the problem with non-surgical interventions (Baarbara et al., 2015). Women should be informed about their anatomical structure, the preoperative and postoperative processes, and the possible complications that may arise and their effects on sexual health. Using effective communication techniques and providing information about the procedure to women who have decided to undergo surgery will be beneficial in reducing preoperative anxiety. At the same time, wound care, pain management, and hygiene education in the postoperative period will contribute to the recovery process (Hadımlı et al., 2021; Okut et al., 2022; Candaş and Yeşilyurt, 2024).

Postoperative care varies depending on the type and extent of the surgical procedure performed. During this period, the patient's vital signs and fluid intake and output should be monitored regularly. Depending on the nature of the surgery, a urinary catheter may be required; therefore, the patient's urinary system functions should be assessed to ensure proper catheter care and the patient should be given the necessary training. During the first week after discharge, it is recommended that urination be performed during showering or with the help of a bidet/water spray bottle; during this process, it is recommended to avoid wiping the perineal area. Although patients are allowed to shower after surgery, it is recommended that they do not sit in a hot bath for long periods during the first week to reduce the risk of bleeding. The use of antibiotic ointment and sanitary pads is considered appropriate for controlling leakage and discharge that may occur during the first postoperative week. In addition, some surgeons may prescribe topical preparations to be applied to the incision sites within the vaginal canal, especially after perineal and vaginoplasty surgeries (Hadımlı et al., 2021; Montrief et al., 2020; Furnas et al., 2021).

During the first week after discharge, it is recommended that urination be performed during showering or with the aid of a bidet/water spray bottle; it is advised to avoid wiping the perineal area during this process. While patients are permitted to shower after surgery, it is recommended that they avoid sitting in hot water baths for long periods during the first week to reduce the risk of bleeding. The use of antibiotic ointment and sanitary pads is considered appropriate for controlling leakage and discharge that may occur during the first postoperative week. In addition, some surgeons may prescribe topical estradiol preparations to be applied to the incision sites within the vaginal canal, especially after perineal and vaginoplasty surgeries. These surgical procedures usually cause mild to moderate pain. Opioid-free analgesic regimens recommended by the surgeon are usually sufficient for pain management; however, additional opioid analgesics may be prescribed in necessary cases. Cold application is recommended to support edema and pain control; in this regard, patients are advised to use a cold gel pack placed between their underwear and flexible outer clothing for 20 minutes, followed by a 20-minute break. Avoid direct skin contact with the cold pack. To reduce pressure on the surgical site, sitting time should be limited as much as possible. Unless contraindicated by other surgical procedures, patients are advised to elevate their pelvic area by positioning themselves on their elbows and knees for approximately ten minutes, five times a day during the first week (Hadımlı et al., 2021; Montrief et al., 2020; Furnas et al., 2021).

Solid food intake should be avoided until bowel peristalsis has been confirmed to have resumed; liquid or soft diets should be preferred until clinical signs such as bowel sounds, gas, and stool passage are observed. Perineal hygiene should be meticulously maintained to reduce the risk of infection. Regular assessment should be performed for complications such as swelling,

erythema, discharge, bleeding, or hematoma at the suture line, and the physician should be informed if these findings develop. It is recommended that patients receive comprehensive education on home care practices prior to discharge. Additionally, women should be advised to seek immediate medical attention if they experience any signs of infection after discharge, such as fever, chills, coldness, local heat increase, bleeding, vaginal discharge, edema, hematoma, or wound separation (Hadımlı et al., 2021; Montrief et al., 2020; Furnas et al., 2021).

It is important to raise social awareness about the anatomical diversity of female genital organs and to educate midwives, nurses, and physicians in order to reduce unnecessary interventions. Information can help identify more suitable candidates for cosmetic procedures (Sasanfar et al., 2024). Midwives and nurses who provide holistic and patient-centered care play key roles in women's sexual health assessment, counseling, clinical care, and referral to specialists (Azar et al., 2022). In the study by Sasanfar and colleagues (2024), women who underwent genital procedures reported that gynecologists and midwives were their most important sources of information about the appearance and function of their genital organs (Sasanfar et al., 2024). However, a systematic review found that despite encountering many women who were concerned about their genital organs or requested genital cosmetic surgery, healthcare professionals did not have sufficient knowledge or positive attitudes and practices regarding these issues (Azmoude et al., 2024). These findings indicate that midwives, nurses, and physicians should have comprehensive guidance on genital Cosmeticsurgery (Ghorbani et al.,2023; Sasanfar et al., 2024). Therefore, these healthcare providers should increase their knowledge regarding the wide variety of normal appearances of female genital organs, the impact of genital cosmetic procedures on female sexual function, potential complications, and the skills required to provide appropriate and effective counseling. To this end, educational programs covering all these topics should be developed, and it is important to include midwives, nurses, and physicians in these educational processes (Sasanfar et al., 2024, Azmoude et al., 2024).

## **CONCLUSION**

Interest in genital cosmetic surgery has increased in recent years, and this is related to body image, sexual satisfaction, cultural expectations, and quality of life. Some studies in the literature show that genital cosmetic surgery can improve genital body image, sexual satisfaction, sexual function, and self-esteem in women. However, a significant portion of these findings are based on observational and short-term studies. It should be noted that subjective outcomes such as sexual function may be influenced by individual expectations and the placebo effect, and that long-term follow-up data are limited. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that surgical complications such as infection, pain, scar formation, sensory changes, and impaired sexual function may occur. Therefore, genital cosmetic surgery is not a universal solution for every woman, and biopsychosocial assessment, setting realistic expectations, and comprehensive counseling are of great importance in the decision-making process.

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