

EVALUATION OF ESTHETIC, FUNCTIONAL, AND QUALITY-OF-LIFE OUTCOME IN ADULT CLEFT LIP AND PALATE PATIENTS

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Objective: Evaluation of esthetic, functional, and health-related quality-of-life (HRQoL) outcomes in adult patients with a repaired cleft lip and palate. The treatment for all patients was based on the so-called Vienna concept.

Patients/Design: Seventy adult patients with a repaired complete cleft lip and palate, ranging in age from 18 to 30 years, were included in the study. Esthetic and functional outcomes were assessed by the patients themselves and by five experts using a visual analog scale. Patients also completed the MOS Short-Form 36 questionnaire to evaluate health-related quality of life.

Results: Patients rated their esthetic outcome significantly worse than the experts did. No significant differences were observed in the ratings for function. Female patients, especially, were dissatisfied with their esthetic outcomes. In a personal interview, nearly 63% of them asked for further treatment, particularly for upper-lip and nose corrections. The health-related quality-of-life questionnaire revealed low scores for only two subscales, namely social functioning and emotional role. In most subscales of health-related quality of life, patients who desired further treatment had significantly lower scores than did patients who desired no further treatment.

Conclusion: Surgery of the lip and nose appears to be of prime importance for patients with a cleft lip and palate. Cleft patients who do not request secondary treatment are not always satisfied with the treatment. Patients with realistic expectations in regard to further treatment should be treated by specialists, whereas those with unrealistic expectations should be referred to a clinical psychologist.