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Contacts:
Shannon McCormick
614-477-2719 or 614-932-9950
shannon@mediasourcetv.com

American Society of Plastic Surgeons
847-228-9900
media@plasticsurgery.org

In the Age of Selfies, America's Love Affair with Lips Is Leading to a Boom in Cosmetic Procedures

*A record number of patients are opting for lip implants, millions more use injections
to get the perfect pucker*

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill., April 18, 2016 – A record number of patients underwent lip augmentation procedures in 2015, making them the second-fastest growing facial procedure in the United States since 2000. Only dermabrasion procedures have grown faster.

“We live in the age of the selfie, and because we see images of ourselves almost constantly on social media, we’re much more aware of how our lips look,” said [David H. Song, MD](#), president of the [American Society of Plastic Surgeons](#). “The good thing about lip procedures is that you have several options. You can change the shape of your lips as subtly as you want.”

According to newly released [data](#) from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), the number of lip implant procedures grew by double-digits in every region of the country in 2015, gaining in popularity in both women and men. In all, there were 27,449 lip implants. On average, that’s a lip implant procedure about every 19 minutes, and an increase of 48 percent since 2000.

In addition to the sharp rise in the number of lip implants, lip injections continued to show staggering growth as well. Between Botox[®] and Dysport[®] injections, and a variety of soft tissue fillers, lip procedures were part of nearly 9.2 million injection procedures in 2015, a combined increase of more than 1,000 percent since 2000.

“Lips are an easy place for people to start,” said [Robert Houser, DO](#), a plastic surgeon in Westerville, Ohio. “A patient may not be ready to commit to something as dramatic as a facelift or eyelid surgery, but there are a variety of ways you can change the shape of your lips.”

Houser says the temporary nature of injections is both a pro and a con for patients. “If a patient doesn’t like the injections, it’s fine, because within a few months they wear off and everything is back to normal,” he said. “But if they do like what injections do for their lips, they have to keep

coming back every few months to maintain them.”

The alternative is a more permanent, but still reversible lip implant. “Lip implants have been around for quite a while, but new technology is taking the industry by storm,” said Houser. “That’s why we’re seeing such growth in implant procedures.”

Made from soft, flexible silicone, newer implants have proven to be both more stable and more pliable than previous implants, said Houser, and procedures are quick and require minimal recovery time.

“We make 2 small incisions in the corners of the mouth, use a tiny passing instrument to pull the implant into place, and you’re done,” said Houser. “Two stitches, very little bruising, minimal swelling and a very quick recovery.”

Since the implants are intended to be permanent, patients no longer need to go back for repeated injections. However, if they decide they no longer want the implants, doctors can remove them.

Another benefit is that newer implants come in a variety of sizes. “It’s all about the contour of the lips and the asymmetry of the face,” said Houser. “The best looking lips aren’t always the fullest.”

In fact, ASPS commissioned a national survey conducted online by Harris poll asking more than a thousand American women which celebrity’s lips they would most like to have. Among celebrities listed, fuller-lip icons Angelina Jolie and Jennifer Garner came in 4th and 3rd place in the survey (12% and 15%), respectively. Scarlett Johansson came in second (25%), but it was the more subtle and sultry lips of Jennifer Lawrence that most people thought were the most attractive (28%).

The desire to have more natural-looking lips may be driving up numbers for lip reduction procedures, as well. According to the latest statistics from ASPS, there were 927 lip reduction surgeries in the United States last year, up more than 34 percent over 2013.

“I think the results show just how much lips can define a person’s face,” said Song. “Even if you’re not born with a perfect pucker, working with your plastic surgeon, you can change your lips subtly.”

“Going to the right doctor is crucial,” added Houser. “Because they understand the entire asymmetry of the face and adhere to the highest level of safety standards, make sure you find a doctor board certified in plastic surgery and a member of ASPS.” These procedures can be subtle and very natural looking, “but mistakes from less qualified providers can be obvious and disastrous,” said Houser.

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll on behalf of MediaSource from April 1-5, 2016 among 1,068 women ages 18 and older. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please contact xxx.

About ASPS

The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) is the world's largest organization of board-certified plastic surgeons. Representing more than 7,000 Member Surgeons, the Society is recognized as a leading authority and information source on aesthetic and reconstructive plastic surgery. ASPS comprises more than 94 percent of all board-certified plastic surgeons in the United States. Founded in 1931, the Society represents physicians certified by The American Board of Plastic Surgery or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. ASPS advances quality care to plastic surgery patients by encouraging high standards of training, ethics, physician practice and research in plastic surgery. You can learn more and visit the American Society of Plastic Surgeons at PlasticSurgery.org or Facebook.com/PlasticSurgeryASPS or Twitter.com/ASPS_News.

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Media Contacts: Shannon McCormick, 614-477-2719 or 614-932-9950, shannon@mediasourcetv.com or Sheila Biggs, 847-228-9900, media@plasticsurgery.org