



# What Is “Snapchat Dysmorphia”? The Plastic Surgery Trend Is Detailed In An Eye Opening Report

There's a reason why #nofilter exists; gone are the days when you'd snap a picture with a polaroid camera and see the same face you see in the mirror. In fact, posting a photo without any filters or touch-ups at all these days is almost unheard of. As ridiculous as that might sound, it's genuinely concerning to me that now, according to a new paper published in the journal *JAMA Facial Plastic Surgery*, there's such a thing as "[Snapchat dysmorphia](#)." [Snapchat dysmorphia is an emerging phenomenon](#) that, according to the research, has some people looking into plastic surgery for the specific purpose of altering their appearance to look like – you guessed it – a Snapchat filter (save for the adorable puppy ears and princess crown, that is).

First of all, before I dive into what exactly Snapchat dysmorphia is, it's important to remind yourself that if plastic surgery is something you're genuinely comfortable with and have been considering for a while, there's nothing wrong with deciding a cosmetic procedure is right for you. But it's crucial to make sure you're doing it for the right reasons, and that you're planning out the procedure with a reliable, trusted medical professional. Having said that, as New York City-based plastic surgeon [Dr. Lara Devgan](#) tells Elite Daily over email, it's also important to remember that *nobody* is perfect, and that perfection cannot be achieved through plastic surgery, or by any other means, for that matter. "What [plastic surgeons] do is medicine, not magic," Devgan says, "and it is important for patients to have a realistic and healthy understanding of that before considering a procedure."

So what exactly is "Snapchat dysmorphia," and where did the trend come from? According to *The Independent*, [the phrase was originally coined by British cosmetic doctor, Tijion Esho](#), in February of 2018. In an interview with the UK news outlet, Esho said that with "the introduction of social platforms and filters over the last five years, more and more patients come into clinics with filtered versions of themselves as the goal they want to achieve." Now, the Snapchat dysmorphia phenomenon is gaining even more recognition,

thanks to a team of researchers from Boston University School of Medicine's department of dermatology, who discussed the trend in the recently published *JAMA Facial Plastic Surgery* paper. "Snapchat dysmorphia," the authors wrote, "has patients seeking out cosmetic surgery to look like filtered versions of themselves" instead of, say, celebrities they like. Specifically, the researchers continued in their paper, many patients are asking plastic surgeons to plump their lips, enlarge their eyes, or thin out their nose in the same way you can edit these facial features with various apps on social media.

In their paper, the researchers also reference the findings of the 2017 Annual American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS) survey, which found that something called "selfie awareness" is currently on the rise: According to the survey's results, 55 percent of facial plastic surgeons who participated in the survey said that many of their patients want procedures that would make them "look better in selfies." Fast-forward one year later and, as Esho told *The Independent*, many plastic surgery patients are seeking procedures that will make them look more like their *filtered* selfies – which, Devgan says, is simply just not possible. "I can help someone make tiny millimeter-level changes to their faces and bodies so they look better in an imperceptible way," she tells *Elite Daily*, "but I can't literally make a human look like a walking Snapchat filter."

And Devgan isn't the only one to dismiss the idea that surgeons can transform their patients into real-life Snapchat filters. Dr. Melissa Doft, a plastic surgeon who practices on Park Avenue in New York City, also tells *Elite Daily* there's no such thing as a "flawless" look, especially when you're talking about cosmetic procedures, because plastic surgeries "produce scars" and "may have complications," she explains. What's more, she adds, it's so important that surgeons communicate these side effects and potential complications to their patients, and "if a doctor is concerned that the patient may be seeking surgery for the wrong reason," Doft says, they should "schedule a follow-up appointment to truly get to know the patient" before deciding whether or not to go through with the surgery.

But another potentially huge issue with the Snapchat dysmorphia phenomenon is that, according to the researchers who wrote the *JAMA Facial Plastic Surgery* paper, "the pervasiveness of these filtered images" may "act as a trigger and lead to body dysmorphic disorder." Body dysmorphic disorder, per the Anxiety and Depression Association of America's definition, is a mental health disorder that affects roughly 2 percent of the general population

and causes someone to constantly fixate on their appearance and perceived "flaws." So basically, the researchers are suggesting that, if someone feels influenced or affected by Snapchat dysmorphia, it may be extremely detrimental to their mental health in the long-term, so much so that it may lead to a diagnosis of body dysmorphic disorder.

Again, this all goes back to the fact that so many people are bombarded with filtered images on a regular basis, and it can be hard to know how to process or make sense of those images in comparison to real life. "Our sense of what's real, what's possible when it comes to beauty, is warped by our overexposure to these images," Northwestern University psychology professor Renee Engeln explained during her 2013 TEDx Talk (clearly she was ahead of the trend, huh?). Instead of seeing filtered images for exactly that – photos that have been edited and manipulated to look a certain way – she said, more and more people are starting to see them as "typical or average."

Dr. Aaron Rollins, a celebrity liposuction doctor and founder of Elite BodySculpture, has also noticed this phenomenon. He tells Elite Daily over email that social media filters can make it "a lot harder for people who aren't comfortable with themselves to be body positive," and can even make things "difficult for those [who] are already self-confident." As a result, he says, sometimes people look to plastic surgery to feel better. In this case, he explains, the patient needs to evaluate why they want a particular procedure, and if other options are available to them.

"Before getting plastic surgery, patients should ask themselves three questions: Why do I want this? How long have I wanted this? Have I considered other options?" Rollins says, adding that it's also important to keep in mind that, no matter what, *no one* is perfect. "I encourage everyone to find their own version of 'perfect,'" he tells Elite Daily. "What makes a patient unique and beautiful – sometimes that involves plastic surgery, and other times it doesn't."