

Selfperception of the vulva

An increasing number of women are seeking medical attention to alter the appearance of their external genitalia, and the number of labiaplasty operations performed worldwide is booming.

Women may seek labia reduction for physical, emotional, or aesthetic reasons. Mostly, they find their genital appearance important, and the increased demand for labiaplasty is typically due to a misperception of what is normal, believing that surgery will improve emotional discomfort, relationship with others, and sexuality. Concerns regarding the appearance of the labia minora can result in considerable psychological and emotional distress, with young girls in puberty being a particularly vulnerable group. During the recent years, the attention and visibility of the vulva and labia have increased, primarily because of the increased popularity of removing pubic hair. Furthermore, pornography and labia images, often selective or digitally edited, are widely available through the media and the Internet, leading to misguided assumptions of what is normal and desirable. Consequently, many women perceive non-protruding and symmetrical labia minora as normal and hence desire a "prepubescent" appearance.