

Generation Z dilemmas: how far to look for patterns?*Dilemas de la generación Z: ¿hasta dónde buscar patrones?**Dilemas da geração Z: até que ponto ir à procura de padrões?***Abstract**

The reflective critical descriptive article aims to highlight the dilemmas of the generation that is the generation that has a ton of information in the palm of their hand in fractions of seconds, through the Internet. The following categories were listed: invasive plastic surgery procedures; generation Z, self-acceptance and image and finally mental and aesthetic health. Concluding that the search for the standard and the perfect stereotype associated with the day-to-day access to social media that do not always show the real life of the “bloggers” triggers the desire and obsession for aesthetic changes, most of the time radical and unnecessary, whose ages are between 18 and 24 years. Obviously, in most cases, the lack of confidence, insecurity and the difficulty of self-acceptance, trigger psychic disorders that lead these people to never be satisfied, and in search of diverting frustrations in most invasive surgeries that end up generating the need constant change, according to the temporary standards of beauty established by the media, but in some cases it is extremely necessary, such as bariatric surgery patients.

Descriptors: Generation Z; Mental Health; Aesthetics; Plastic Surgery; Self-Acceptance.

Resumen

El artículo descriptivo crítico reflexivo pretende evidenciar los dilemas de la generación que tiene en la palma de su mano una tonelada de información en fracciones de segundo, a través de Internet. Se enumeraron las siguientes categorías: procedimientos de cirugía plástica invasiva; generación Z, autoaceptación e imagen y finalmente salud mental y estética. Concluyendo que la búsqueda del patrón y estereotipo perfecto asociado al acceso cotidiano a las redes sociales que no siempre muestran la vida real de las “blogueirinhas” desencadena el deseo y la obsesión por cambios estéticos, la mayoría de las veces radicales e innecesarios, cuyas edades tienen entre 18 y 24 años. Evidentemente, en la mayoría de los casos, la falta de confianza, la inseguridad y la dificultad para aceptarse a sí mismos, desencadenan trastornos psíquicos que llevan a estas personas a no estar nunca satisfechas, y en busca de desviar frustraciones en cirugías muchas veces invasivas y que acaban generando el necesitan un cambio constante, de acuerdo con los estándares temporales de belleza establecidos por los medios, pero en algunos casos es extremadamente necesario, como los pacientes de cirugía bariátrica.

Descriptores: Generación Z; Salud Mental; Estética; Cirugía Plástica; Auto-Aceptación.

Resumo

O artigo descritivo crítico reflexivo tem como objetivo destacar os dilemas da geração que se trata da geração que tem uma tonelada de informações na palma da mão em frações de segundos, através da Internet. Foram elencadas as seguintes categorias: procedimentos invasivos de cirurgia plástica; geração Z, autoaceitação e imagem e por fim saúde mental e estética. Concluindo que a busca pelo padrão e o estereótipo perfeito associados ao acesso dia a dia das mídias sociais que nem sempre mostram a vida real das “blogueirinhas” faz desencadear o desejo e a obsessão por mudanças estéticas, na maioria das vezes radicais e sem necessidade, cuja idades estão entre 18 e 24 anos. Obviamente que na maioria dos casos a falta de confiança, insegurança e a dificuldade de autoaceitação, desencadeiam transtornos psíquicos que levam essas pessoas a nunca estarem satisfeitas, e em busca de desviar as frustrações em cirurgias na maioria das vezes invasivas e que acabam gerando a necessidade constante de mudança, de acordo com os padrões temporários de beleza estabelecidos pela mídia, porém em alguns casos e extremamente necessário como os pacientes de cirurgia bariátrica.

Descriptores: Geração Z; Saúde Mental; Estética; Cirurgia Plástica; Autoaceitação.

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Introduction

The performance of health professionals in the face of the increase in plastic surgeries due to the imposition of standards is the global plan. The following document unites the educational intention of our practice, in line with the Curriculum Guidelines of Faculdade Vértice - Univértix, strengthening the identity of individuals, clarifying their organization, pointing out the objectives for student learning and, above all, defining how the faculty will work to achieve the students' mental health, knowing how to distinguish when something becomes healthy vs. unhealthy - in this highlighted case, we see the use of a sense of belonging and the engagement of the entire school community around a common educational project: the learning of the whole society and, mainly, of the children and youth generation, which we will work on facing the issue of the Dilemmas of generation Z: to what extent to go looking for patterns.

Thus, the health professional must pedagogically guide the adolescents, helping them to overcome prejudice and discrimination with their bodies, creating an environment conducive to establishing and restoring physical and mental health. The interference of indiscriminate practices in the choice of plastic surgery is noticeable. Conflicts are part of interactions, but it is necessary to deal with them based on care and respect for differences, issues that are so central in the individual's educational and health care process. It is believed that, having respect and democratic value as a basis in relationships, such tensions are potent for reflection, transformation and constant maturation in professional practice. In this sense, we understand that it is essential to strengthen relationships, seeking to welcome and listen, so that joint actions can contribute to the education and quality of life of adolescents¹.

Another relevant point in this theme is family formation. According to sociologist Talcott Parsons, the family is a machine that produces human personalities. From this perspective, the problem of the persistence of mental health as a taboo for society is presented as a thought passed from generation to generation, which makes it difficult to exterminate it by external forces, since the problem is found within the homes of Brazilian people and extends over a long timeline. Being taboo a topic so relevant to society: mental health. Given the importance of partnership in these relationships and the obstacles faced by all, it is of the utmost importance that health professionals act in line with other professionals in education for health promotion, aiming at plastic surgery by self-choice and not by aesthetic pressures from today society, called Generation Z^{2,3}.

Given the above, the objective was to reflect on the need for acceptance of body standards by generation Z from the search for plastic surgery procedures.

Methodology

This is a reflective, critical study with a qualitative approach. A search was performed in the PubMed, Google Scholar and Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO)

databases. The research, carried out in May 2022, was carried out through the help of the Virtual Health Library (VHL) search platform, selecting articles through the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS): "Generation Z", "Mental Health", "Aesthetics", "Plastic Surgery" and "Self Acceptance".

The study on screen is based on the Theory of Generations, specifically generation Z, and the search for plastic surgeries, based on the current context of consumerism linked to mental health experienced in the extremely visual society.

Results and Discussion

Invasive plastic surgery procedures

Youth and beauty are hot topics in post-modernity, and plastic surgery may be the main topic, being the most sought after by Brazilians, who are between 18 and 24 years old who undergo these invasive procedures to maintain or fix something "genetic defect". People in the aforementioned age group, who are already inserted in the job market and society as well as in the digital world, end up being bombarded by pressures from almost all sides, becoming increasingly complex and unhappy with their bodies because of the standards imposed from the social, digital and labor market^{4,5}.

Plastic surgeries have been much sought after because they can increase self-esteem and because they are the surgeries that "fix the little mistakes", even if to fix these "genetic little mistakes" the patient has to undergo invasive procedures, however, taking into account what has already been discussed and the issues raised in the analyzed literature, people, after plastic surgery, managed to have an improvement in self-esteem and better interpersonal relationships. Even though these surgeries have been widely sought after, due to their high possibility of "repairing body deformities", often, through invasive procedures, there is a risk that some things get out of control, and end up in a disaster⁶⁻⁸.

Therefore, surgical procedures in pursuit of beauty must have psychological accompaniments and support, so that the patient is prepared, leading him to post-surgical procedure acceptance, since the modification, even of minimal things, can trigger various disorders, such as anxiety and depression, precisely because of possible errors or lack of precision in them. Finally, even if these procedures bring better acceptance and better interpersonal relationships, they can also lead to various problems, such as organ perforation, or even death^{7,8}.

Generation Z, self-acceptance and image

Generation Z is the term used to differentiate those born between the years 1992 and 2010. Grown individuals already with access to the Internet and its technologies. There are those who call them the "immediate generation", which is totally true, since after the technological advances of the last 2 decades, everything has become faster and easier. One-click bill payments you send money to a person dozens of kilometers away, chat with a friend over a video call. It is



through the virtual environment, in a very exposed way, that everyone connects, shows their desires and achievements, and creates new bonds. And it is in this environment that young people grow and develop their personalities. They create goals for themselves to become the same or similar to those they are always following on social networks, the so-called "digital influencers". Then comes a search for beauty standards, sculptural bodies, muscular abdomens, faces pronounced as perfect^{9,10}.

Given the above, it is observed that the individual, usually a teenager, finds himself obliged to fit into these archetypes, since the vision that a person has about himself comes from his experiences and perceptions throughout his development. It can generate satisfaction for some and dissatisfaction for others, so that this second group will have insecurity about their own image. And, as seen earlier, generation Z is the one that chooses fast paths, if possible, immediate ones, so the solution will be the method that gives you the expected result as soon as possible^{11,12}.

Mental health and aesthetics: is there a balance?

In the 21st century we find generation Z, a generation that was born along with technology. A Polish sociologist named Zygmunt Bauman already described current society as if we were liquid times. In the modern view, we have the view of society's standardization, of always changing to something new. Currently, it is notorious that many young people seek to standardize their image to match the current times, where the new technological era is based on photo applications, in which the social standard is to post "healthy and fitness" photos⁹.

This generation comes through invasive surgeries looking to find "perfection". But how far should one go to find it? To what extent does it stop being an aesthetic case and become a case of mental health - the psychological one?

There are many questions asked that lead people to want to know what are the reasons for the growing search for surgical procedures. Given this scenario, it is clear that many young people seek to follow the same lifestyle that their idols have on the Internet, seeking to improve their lives through risky plastic surgeries⁹. But the most important question is: Why don't these young people first seek help from highly trained professionals who can help them work on their psychological side so that there is self-acceptance before putting their lives at risk through risky and unnecessary surgeries?

The dissatisfaction of obese people with their bodies leads to bariatric surgery, of course some also perform it due to health needs, diseases and the like - with clinical indication for this -, but aesthetics is one of the main reasons for seeking this procedure. In one study, patients

aged between 32 and 69 years who were going to undergo the procedure were approached, who reported fear of returning to their previous weight, social criticism about the body before and after weight loss, especially in the postoperative period, due to the rapid weight loss accompanied by flaccidity and, consequently, the need for a new procedure to remove excess skin, which would be plastic surgery, which is not always performed quickly, and the psychological marks of being out of beauty standards raise this fear that the individual has to return to the body they had before the surgery¹³.

It is evident, therefore, that the social values of the 21st century are determined by patterns of the culture of Generation Z, which is a movement in the current world that unconsciously stimulates a perfect model, which for Zygmunt Bauman "the problem is not to consume; it is the tireless desire to continue consuming". Through this, it is noted that the current generation often chooses quick and easy means, whether surgical or not, to enter the standard proposed by society. Technologies exert an enormous influence on the behavior of the current generation, what is evident is that technologies shape the behavior of the being, which reflects on social issues, where young people are trying to follow the idea of having their bodies disclosed in the media and to be as similar as possible to the group in which he belongs or adapt to belong to one¹⁴.

Conclusion

It is essential, therefore, in view of the facts presented, that the dilemmas of generation Z are considered a very relevant subject for citizenship, and that it affects, above all the teenagers. In this regard, the indiscriminate use of plastic surgery due to pressure from society leads the individual to make serious decisions to be accepted, generating mental disorders that can trigger problems of self-esteem and anxiety.

Furthermore, with the advancement of modernity, it is in the digital environment that youth learn to connect with the world and expose their ties and desires, creating their own identities and friendships and often being influenced by the standards of beauty imposed by society, in order to be followed to be accepted in daily life and social groups.

Thus, it is worth emphasizing the importance of health professionals in guiding adolescents about respect for their bodies and self-acceptance, managing, through this preparation - from a healthy environment created in care, to health education -, to reduce the rate of young people affected by the aesthetic epidemic of Gen Z and preventing the worsening of the mental health crisis they experience.

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