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Reconstructing the Body: Sleeve Gastrectomy, Stigma, and Subjective Experiences

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to make sense of individuals' decision to undergo gastric sleeve surgery not only in terms of biomedical considerations but also in relation to social, emotional, and normative factors. To this end, the study provides an in-depth examination of the factors underlying the decision to undergo gastric sleeve surgery, including social pressures, individuals' emotional turning points, and the body norms imposed by modern society. The study was designed using qualitative research methods. Face-to-face and online interviews were conducted with 19 participants using a pre-prepared semi-structured interview form. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that individuals who underwent sleeve gastrectomy viewed the process not only as a means of improving their health but also as a search for a social, emotional, and psychological solution. Exclusion from social life, the inability to fulfil social roles, and difficulties in relationships with members of one's immediate social circle were among the primary motivations underlying the decision to undergo surgery. Findings relating to the postoperative period show that physical transformation has multidimensional effects on individuals. Overall, the results of the study suggest that gastric sleeve surgery should be considered not merely as a medical intervention but also as a process that causes radical changes in individuals' social visibility, levels of social acceptance, and self-perceptions.

Keywords

Body Sociology, Gastric Sleeve Surgery, Obesity, Stigma, Modernity

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