

Contact: KMR Communications, Inc.
P: 212.213.6444
F: 212.213.4699
info@kmrcommunications.com



WACKO JACKO: When Cosmetic Surgery Goes Too Far

New York, NY February 18, 2003 – With all the recent news coverage regarding Michael Jackson’s alleged obsession with cosmetic surgery, a little known condition comes to mind: Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD). Many who have seen Michael Jackson of late, have been left wondering why his plastic surgeon(s) did not ‘put down the scalpel’ and say, “that is enough surgery Mr. Jackson.” Even more alarming than Jackson’s altered appearance due to over 50 surgeries by one surgeon’s estimate, is the fact that some sources estimate that as many as one in every fifty Americans suffer from some form of BDD, a mental disorder that causes the victim to feel ashamed about their appearance. BDD sufferers become obsessed over things that they find undesirable, when there is actually nothing wrong. “BDD can cause beautiful people to spiral downwards into a world of depression, anxiety and obsession that can lead to suicidal inclinations,” says Elliot Duboys, MD, who is board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.

What signs should one look for? Dr. Duboys warns that “BDD is often very difficult to diagnose because not much is known about it. The same was once true for anorexia, which only began to gain recognition less than two decades ago.” Still there are some signs that may indicate that a person is suffering from BDD. They include:

- Frequently looking in the mirror, or avoiding mirrors all together
- Constantly comparing one’s appearance to that of others, or critiquing the appearance of others
- Compensating for a “perceived defect” by wearing extra makeup, or covering the area with clothing
- Always seeking reassurance or trying to convince others of one’s flaws
- Excessive grooming
- Excessive exercising and/or dieting
- Avoiding situations where the perceived defect might be exposed (i.e., swimming)

The list goes on. According to Dr. Duboys, any good surgeon questions a patient prior to surgery to see what his/her motives are for having a particular procedure. “If a patient comes in requesting a nose job because a loved one has made a condescending remark about it, then that is when I would question their motives and help that particular patient make an informed choice.” All surgeons do not practice the same moral code. Michael Jackson’s obsession with his face started because of remarks his father made, and was allowed to spiral out of control because of surgeons who did not take the time to question his mental state. For some surgeons though, BDD is the answer to keeping their office doors open. “I made an ethical promise when I started my practice. The first rule is to always keep my patients’ mental and physical health my number one priority.”

For those who do suffer from BDD, there are several treatment options that include meeting with a therapist regularly and taking anti-depressants like Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, Luvox, and Anafranil. Even with treatment options, many victims are ashamed of having BDD, and often try to hide it from themselves and others.

###

For additional information, to schedule an interview or to request products, please contact KMR Communications, Inc. at 212.213.6444, or info@kmrcommunications.com. KMR Communications, Inc. is a vital communications resource, fulfilling the interview of the news media with experts from the medical, fitness and beauty industry.