

Psychological Impacts of Orthognathic Surgery

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Abstract:

Orthognathic surgery is a big change for a patient which will inevitably take a large psychological toll on the patient, with a wealth of information available on how orthognathic surgery affects a patient. This project addresses a notable gap in existing literature regarding the mental health impacts of such procedures by developing an informational leaflet targeting the psychological wellbeing of patients undergoing orthognathic surgery. The leaflet serves not only as a resource for informed consent but also to prepare patients psychologically for their surgical journey.

The availability of a clinical psychologist in NHS Tayside helps provide a service for those most vulnerable or deemed by the surgical/orthodontic team most likely to struggle during their surgical journey. Unfortunately, this service is not available to all patients, so it was deemed there was a need for a leaflet to give all patients to help them through their surgery.

To measure the effectiveness of the leaflet, a pre- and post-intervention survey was administered to a small cohort of six patients during their assessment appointments. The data collected showed that the leaflet has a positive overall impact on the patient's readiness for their surgery, indicating that patient understanding of the psychological implications of surgery improved markedly following exposure to the leaflet, with average post-leaflet scores between 8 and 10. Highest increases were observed in areas related to awareness of available support services, reinforcing the leaflet's utility in enhancing patient preparedness.

While initial results show a promising result this project is limited by the sample size, showing that further research and studies need to be carried out to validate the findings. A strength of this project was the multidisciplinary approach between orthodontists, maxillofacial surgeons & clinical psychologists all bringing together their knowledge & expertise to create a leaflet that provided comprehensive support for patients. Future iterations will focus on expanding data collection and transitioning to a digital format for accessibility. Continuous evaluation will be essential for maintaining the leaflet's relevance and effectiveness, particularly in the evolving landscape of mental health and surgical care. Ultimately, this initiative aims to foster better psychological preparedness and support for patients navigating orthognathic surgery.