



## AB065. SOH23ABS\_170. Evaluating the burden of cosmetic tourism on a regional plastic surgery unit

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**Background:** Cosmetic tourism refers to a recent phenomenon in which patients travel abroad for surgery carried out in predominantly private institutions. Often citing cost saving opportunities and expedited surgical wait times as reasons for travel, patients undergoing elective cosmetic procedures including abdominoplasty, liposuction, and aesthetic breast surgery comprising the majority of surgeries carried out under the “medical tourism” umbrella. Recent trends in the literature on complication rates in this cohort on local surgical units postoperatively has been noted. This study aimed to evaluate the scale and economic burden of elective aesthetic surgeries carried out abroad on a regional plastic surgery unit.

**Methods:** This was a prospective-retrospective cohort study carried out in a regional plastic surgery unit. Patients referred to the department for complications following surgery performed abroad were retrospectively collected from January 2022 to July 2022. Baseline demographics, and data relating to the country of surgery, procedure undertaken, nature of complication, investigations undertaken, and interventions required were collected. Approximate cost analysis of their treatment to the Health Service Executive was calculated. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences was carried out with P values <0.05 considered statistically significant.

**Results:** A total of 22 individual patients were identified accounting for 24 separate episodes of treatment. Most (70%) originated from Turkey. Abdominoplasty accounted for 37.5% of presentations. These patients accounted for 134 inpatient days with an estimated average cost of €3,459.

**Conclusions:** Demands upon the health service executive due to cosmetic tourism are increasing at significant cost, both financially and in terms of resource allocation. This growing phenomenon must be factored into future healthcare service planning and budgeting.

**Keywords:** Cosmetic; tourism; plastic; finance; economic

### Acknowledgments

*Funding:* None.

### Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

*Ethical Statement:* The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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doi: 10.21037/map-23-ab065

**Cite this abstract as:** Keane A, Feeley A, Knightley N, Cahill K, O'Sullivan P. AB065. SOH23ABS\_170. Evaluating the burden of cosmetic tourism on a regional plastic surgery unit. *Mesentery Peritoneum* 2023;7:AB065.