

Gluteal augmentation in Nollywood: Haematological alterations, medical risks, and economic consequences for Nigerian women

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Abstract:

Gluteal augmentation known as Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL), which uses autologous fat transfer to make the buttocks bigger, has gone from a little-known cosmetic procedure to a much talked-about cultural trend in Nigeria. The quick growth of this technique is intimately tied to global beauty trends, the power of social media, and the strong cultural impact of Nollywood. Even while surgical techniques and safety rules for the time around surgery have gotten better, there are still big clinical concerns, especially pulmonary fat embolism and problems that come up with uncontrolled filler-based or "liquid" buttock augmentation procedures. These problems frequently present as specific haematological and laboratory anomalies, including perioperative haemoglobin reduction, thrombocytopenia, coagulopathy, hypoxaemia, and inflammatory reactions. In addition to its clinical effects, gluteal augmentation has significant economic ramifications. In Nigeria, where most healthcare is paid for out of pocket, complications can be very expensive for individuals, families, and healthcare facilities. Medical tourism to destinations with lesser costs makes postoperative care even more difficult because complications often return to local healthcare systems for treatment.

This review integrates contemporary evidence on four principal themes: (1) the cultural impact of Nollywood and celebrity discourse on the demand for cosmetic surgery; (2) the techniques and epidemiology of gluteal augmentation; (3) the haematological and laboratory profiles associated with complications such as fat embolism syndrome (FES), silicone embolism syndrome (SES), coagulopathy, venous thromboembolism, and sepsis; and (4) the economic ramifications of these procedures within Nigeria's health system. The essay combines global surgical safety guidelines, regulatory advisories, and health financing research to suggest a paradigm for prevention, early identification, better surgical practice, and policy reform.

Keywords: gluteal augmentation; nollywood; haematological alterations; medical risks; nigerian women

Introduction

Nollywood is one of the biggest film businesses in the world, and it has a big impact on beauty standards and cultural stories in Nigeria and the African diaspora. Nollywood plays a big role in modern aesthetic norms, especially when it comes to body image. It does this along with Afrobeats, digital influencers, and social media involvement across platforms.

In recent years, Nigerian popular culture has talked more and more about operations to make the buttocks look better. Entertainment journalism and online discussions often talk about celebrities and social media stars who have had cosmetic surgery, whether it is true or not. This level of publicity has helped make cosmetic surgery a commonplace element of modern beauty culture[2].

While empirical studies directly investigating Nollywood's impact on cosmetic surgery adoption are scarce, the rising prevalence of public discourse suggests that gluteal augmentation has evolved from a private medical choice to a broadly contested societal issue. Media coverage and celebrity perspectives, both positive and negative, have made this conversation even louder. They have brought attention to the link between personal freedom, social ambition, and health risk[3].

Globally, gluteal augmentation is one of the cosmetic treatments that is increasing the fastest. The International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery says that hundreds of thousands of treatments are done each year, with autologous fat transfer being the most common method. The aesthetic attractiveness of body shaping treatments is clear, but the medical hazards that come with them show how important it is to practise

medicine responsibly and have open conversations with the public about them[4].

The most frequent way to make the buttocks bigger is still autologous fat transfer. Liposuction takes fat from places like the abdomen, flanks, or thighs, processes it, and then injects it back into the buttocks to improve the shape and projection.

The safety of this method depends a lot on where the injection is done. Major surgical associations say that fat should only be injected into the subcutaneous tissue above the gluteal fascia. Injecting into deeper muscle layers greatly raises the danger of fat entering big gluteal veins and travelling to the lungs, where it can cause pulmonary fat embolism, a complication that can be deadly[5].

Newer surgical recommendations are recommending more and more the use of ultrasound guidance during surgery to make sure that the cannula is placed correctly and to stop intramuscular injection.

Implants for the buttocks

Silicone implants are another way to make anything bigger. Implants don't have the same embolic hazards as fat injections, but they do come with their own set of problems, including as capsular contracture, implant malposition, seroma development, wound dehiscence, and infection.

These dangers, together with a greater rate of revisions, have made implants less popular than fat transfer procedures[6].

There is an increasing worry about using large-volume dermal fillers or illegal injectable silicone to make the buttocks bigger without surgery. These kinds of treatments are often done outside of controlled medical settings and have been linked to serious problems such as silicone embolism syndrome, chronic inflammatory reactions, tissue necrosis, and systemic toxicity.

Regulatory authorities around the world have given strong warnings against these treatments, especially when they are done by people who aren't licensed or in places that aren't hospitals [7].

The need for gluteal augmentation is growing over the world. International assessments show that the number of procedures is always going up, especially in the Americas, Europe, and some parts of Asia. In Nigeria, accurate epidemiological statistics are limited due to the lack of national cosmetic surgery registries. But anecdotal evidence, social media visibility, and trends in medical tourism show that more Nigerian women are becoming interested[8].

There are a lot of reasons for this desire, such as the way social media emphasises curvy body forms, the impact of celebrities and aspirational culture, globalised beauty standards, and the fact that medical tourism locations have operations that are relatively cheap.

Turkey and other countries have become popular places for cosmetic surgery because they provide packages that include surgery, lodging, and travel services at far lower prices than in Western countries.

These pricing differences make operations easier to get, but they also make it harder to keep care going, especially when people have problems following surgery and go home[10].

Laboratory and blood-related signs of problems with gluteal augmentation

Gluteal augmentation techniques can lead to distinctive haematological alterations indicative of blood loss, inflammatory responses, embolic events, and infection.

Contemporary liposuction methods employ tumescent infiltration, comprising diluted local anaesthetics and vasoconstrictor drugs. This

method cuts down on blood loss a lot more than older liposuction methods[11].

Even with these improvements, it is usual for haemoglobin levels to drop by 1 to 3 g/dL after surgery, especially after large-volume liposuction. Consequently, mild postoperative anaemia may arise, particularly in individuals with insufficient preoperative iron reserves[12].

Monitoring should consist of a full blood count, iron indices if necessary, and electrolyte and metabolic panels to assess fluid changes.

Fat embolism syndrome is still the most dreaded problem that might happen after BBL surgery. This usually happens when fat gets into the venous circulation after an injection and then moves to the lungs[12].

Clinical manifestations encompass: acute respiratory distress, hypoxaemia, neurological alterations, petechial rash, tachycardia, and fever. Common haematological problems include anaemia, thrombocytopenia, increased inflammatory markers, and a non-specific rise in D-dimer levels.

Silicone embolism syndrome happens when liquid silicone is injected into soft tissues. It causes sudden respiratory collapse and systemic inflammatory responses that are comparable to fat embolism syndrome.

Laboratory results may show thrombocytopenia, hypoxaemia, high levels of inflammatory markers, and in very bad cases, haemolysis or disseminated intravascular coagulation.

Because a lot of injections happen outside of medical settings, diagnosis typically depends a lot on clinical suspicion[13].

Longer surgery times, not being able to move, and inflammation after surgery all raise the risk of venous thromboembolism in body-contouring surgery. Laboratory results may show: high levels of D-dimer, low oxygen levels in pulmonary embolism, and problems with blood clotting in severe systemic disease. Postoperative infections continue to be a major issue, especially after surgeries done in places that aren't sterile[14].

Laboratory signs for severe sepsis include leukocytosis, high C-reactive protein, increased erythrocyte sedimentation rate, and elevated lactate levels.

Complications related to gluteal augmentation go beyond just blood problems. Possible problems include acute respiratory distress syndrome, nerve damage (including sciatic neuropathy), soft-tissue necrosis, chronic pain syndromes, problems with the implant, and psychological discomfort and bodily dysmorphia[15].

A lot of Nigerian people go abroad for cosmetic surgery since it's cheaper. Countries like Turkey offer BBL packages that cost between \$2,500 and \$6,500, which is a lot less than what they cost in North America or Europe.

But problems often come up after patients get home, which means that local healthcare services have to deal with them. About 70–77% of all health spending in Nigeria comes from out-of-pocket payments, which means that the country's healthcare system still relies significantly on them. As a result, problems that need hospitalisation, intensive care, or surgery can put families in a lot of debt[16].

Nollywood's cultural impact goes beyond only entertainment; it also affects how people think about beauty and lifestyle. Celebrities and influencers are strong role models whose decisions might make cosmetic surgeries seem natural [17].

The entertainment industry should help people make better choices by being responsible and: talking openly about the hazards of surgery, opposing uncontrolled operations, encouraging people to see a doctor, and promoting safe practices[18].

Conclusion

Gluteal augmentation has emerged as a significant subject in Nigeria's cultural and medical spheres. Even while surgical techniques have gotten better and safer, the process still has a lot of medical hazards, especially when done outside of controlled circumstances.

Clinicians must be on the lookout for changes in blood and lab tests that could mean problems like fat embolism syndrome, silicone embolism syndrome, venous thromboembolism, or an infection after surgery. The economic effects of Nigeria's out-of-pocket healthcare system are just as critical. Complications can put families in a lot of financial trouble. To deal with these problems, healthcare providers, lawmakers, regulatory agencies, and cultural leaders all need to work together. It is possible to make cosmetic surgery safer via better regulation, public education, and clinical vigilance.

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