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Zoom Dysmorphia and Increasing Use of Video Technology: Body Dysmorphic Disorder Screening by Telehealth

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Telehealth is defined as providing and facilitating health care, health information, and educational services through telecommunication and digital communication technologies.¹ A wide variety of technologies are currently being used, such as live videoconferencing, mobile health applications, remote patient monitoring, “store and forward” electronic transmission, text message, fax, e-mail, and telephone to provide telehealth services.¹ Even before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, videoconferencing technology was used to provide health care services to patients in rural areas, inmates, and military personnel.^{1,2} However, with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the use of telehealth applications. In a recent study³ focusing on pandemic-based changes in US mental health care delivery, the authors reported increasing frequency of patients choosing telepsychology applications—up to 12 times more (85.33%) than the pre-pandemic level (7.07%).

The increasing use of videoconferencing applications has made individuals more concerned and anxious about their appearance. People became more aware of their looks as they started to see their faces on the screen for hours. They started comparing their appearance more with others because they could see images of others simultaneously on the screen. Despite the decrease in face-to-face patient examinations after the pandemic, >50% of dermatologists state that cosmetic dermatology consultations have increased compared to pre-pandemic levels, and 82.7% report that their patients are not as satisfied with their appearance as before.⁴ Furthermore, 40% of individuals who were not interested in aesthetic procedures previously said that they sought aesthetic procedures after videoconferencing became more widespread.⁴

There are several options for using videoconferencing currently in practice. These applications are referred to as

Zoom in everyday language and scientific literature. The concept of Zoom dysmorphia was discussed by Rice et al.⁵ It is defined as dissatisfaction with one's own appearance secondary to the increasing use of Zoom in daily life and comparing one's appearance with others and seeking cosmetic consultations.⁵ Prolonged Zoom dysmorphia may trigger development of body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) or may even worsen preexisting BDD.⁵ Considering the increasing demand for cosmetic applications after the pandemic and the possible effects of zoom dysmorphia on BDD, the probability of BDD patients presenting in cosmetic clinics may increase. Therefore, evaluation of patients for BDD is crucial, as BDD is considered a contraindication for major cosmetic procedures. Different screening tools for BDD in cosmetic settings are summarized in Table 1.^{6–26}

Considering the pandemic restrictions, physicians in cosmetic settings may prefer telehealth applications for BDD screening before any potential procedure. Currently, the recommended method for telepsychiatry is videoconferencing systems with appropriate verification, privacy, and security parameters. With regard to BDD screening tools, the questions may be sent to the patients by e-mail, and the patient may answer these questions during the videoconference interviews. With this screening method, the physician has a general idea about the patient's physical appearance concerns and can select patients who are suitable for the procedure remotely before meeting face to face. Establishing a BDD diagnosis is sometimes a challenge due to the patients' lack of insight and embarrassment about their complaints. Although interviews via telehealth may not be equivalent to the ideal structured psychiatric examination, telehealth interactions can be a good start for screening patients for BDD before cosmetic procedures.

It is predicted that virtual visits and videoconferencing apps will continue even after the COVID-19 pandemic, and physicians will continue to use telehealth applications in appropriate patients or when necessary. More studies are warranted to assess and validate psychometric features and the validity of these screening questionnaires in telehealth settings.

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Table 1. Screening Tools for Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD)^a

Tools	Settings	Administration	Remarks
Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire ^{6-9,b,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General population Psychiatric settings Cosmetic settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 1–4 items Takes 1–5 minutes Based on dichotomized answers “yes/no” For adolescents and adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and brief Evaluates current and lifetime BDD Compatible with <i>DSM-5</i> criteria Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire–Dermatology Version ^{10,b,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cosmetic dermatology surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report (includes defect rating scale scored by the clinician) 1–4 items Takes 1–5 minutes Based on 5-point Likert scale For adolescents and adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and brief Evaluates current and lifetime BDD Compatible with <i>DSM-5</i> criteria Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire–Aesthetic Surgery ^{11,b,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aesthetic rhinoplasty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 7 items Takes 1–2 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and brief Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Cosmetic Procedure Screening Questionnaire ^{12,b,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cosmetic surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 9 items Takes 5–10 minutes For adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and brief Evaluates current BDD Compatible with <i>DSM-5</i> criteria Sensitive to determine pre-post treatment changes Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Dysmorphic Concern Questionnaire ^{13-16,b,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General population Psychiatric settings Dermatology settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 7 items Takes 5 minutes For adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted from the General Health Questionnaire Assesses not only BDD symptoms but also olfactory reference syndrome and non-BDD somatic symptoms Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Body Image Disturbance Questionnaire ^{17,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 7 items Takes 5 minutes Based on 5-point Likert scale For adolescents and adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compatible with <i>DSM-IV</i> criteria Modified version of the Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Body Dysmorphic Disorder–Screening Test ^{8,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maxillofacial surgery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 20 items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed by combining the Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire–Dermatology Version and Body Dysmorphic Disorder Examination Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Body Dysmorphic Disorder Symptom Scale ^{18,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatric settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 54 items Takes 10–15 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses both current BDD and severity Evaluates the symptoms of BDD in 7 groups Provides 2 separate scores for total severity and symptom scores Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Body Dysmorphic Disorder–Dimensional Scale ^{19,20,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 5 items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and brief Compatible with <i>DSM-5</i> criteria Evaluates BDD multidimensionally Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Assessment Scale for Body Dysmorphic Disorder ²¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychiatric settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 2 different versions: 28 and 40 items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed for plastic surgery, dentistry, and dermatology Tested on patients with BDD Can be used by clinicians at no cost, but only in Portuguese, and is freely available on the internet
Multidimensional Youth Body Dysmorphic Inventory ^{22,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adolescents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 21 items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and brief Compatible with <i>DSM-5</i> criteria Developed for adolescents Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Body Dysmorphic Disorder Scale for Youth ^{23,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adolescents Young adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 20 items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple and brief Compatible with <i>DSM-5</i> criteria Developed for adolescents and young adults (aged 12–25 years) May be used for both screening and assessing severity Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Multidimensional Body Self-Relations Questionnaire–Appearance Scales ^{24,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 34 items Rated on a 5-point Likert scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates appearance-related aspects of body image multidimensionally May be used in clinical, perioperative, and research practice Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet
Appearance Anxiety Inventory ^{25,26,c}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General population Psychiatric settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-report 2 versions: 9 and 10 items Rated on a 5-point Likert scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses the cognitive-behavioral aspects of BDD and severity May screen presence of BDD and evaluate severity Sensitive to detection, especially early BDD, and to analyze changes in severity with treatment 9-item version more suitable to assess young adults and frequent social media users Can be used by clinicians at no cost and is freely available on the internet

^aThese tools should be used for BDD screening, not for diagnostic, severity, and further assessment.^bValidated screening tools in cosmetic settings.^cTools in English that are freely available on the internet.

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