Unsatisfactory Results in Augmentation Mammoplasty: Chest and Breast Asymmetry

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ABSTRACT / Mild to moderate and at times, rather severe forms of asymmetry are overlooked preoperatively by the patient and even at times, by the physician. Preoperative awareness of breast and chest asymmetry is important in proper planning for surgery in order to gain maximum balance. Awareness of the asymmetries that may exist also enables a physician to be more realistic in stating limitations of the expected results from surgery.

Unsatisfactory results, noted postoperatively, can usually be related to the anatomy evident preoperatively. Unsatisfactory results are, at times, unavoidable, but when they occur unexpectedly, one must ask if it is the breast or the chest that is at fault. The proper selection of procedure, the proper selection or variance of implants for augmentation, and the proper placement, often times in irregular fashion, of implant materials are essential for good results. A plea is made for more detailed attention to the preoperative anatomy of the breast and the thoracic cage and for better planning in augmentation surgery.

KEY WORDS / Chest asymmetry; Breast asymmetry; Chest and breast asymmetry.

Body image is, always has been, and always will be important. The state of acceptability of a woman to herself is brought sharply into focus when the function, beauty, and form of the breast is considered. Augmentation with silicone gel or fluid filled implants generally yields excellent anatomic results and happy patient and spouse (Fig. 1 A,B). Unsatisfactory results unexpected by the patient, and at times by the doctor, need a retrospective review, if future results are to be improved. Much has been written on the problems of breast asymmetry (1, 2, 6, 7), but

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Fig. 1. Expected results in augmentation for hypomastia. (A and B): Preoperative. (C and D): Postoperative, 6 months.

asymmetry of the thoracic cage (3–5) as a major cause of unsatisfactory breast results is frequently overlooked.

The age of strapping the breasts flat, in the twenties, has passed; as has much of the need and desire of women to nurse their children. The breast has become more important to both sexes aesthetically, and its importance has shifted from the ability to suckle to that of emotional, sexual, and social acceptance.