

Exploring the Role of the External Nose in Facial Aesthetics: An Anatomical Approach towards Understanding Beauty Standards

Abdul Malik^{1*}, Chinwe Jemimah Ukpai², Mohd. Abu Bakr Quadri¹, Shakera³, Md. Imran Khan¹

¹Department of Anatomy, State Takmil-ut-Tib College & Hospital, Lucknow, U.P. India

²Department of Human Anatomy, College of Medicine, Veritas University Abuja, Nigeria

³Department of Ayush, Govt. Ayurvedic Hospital, Gangapur City, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan, India

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*Corresponding author: Abdul Malik

Department of Anatomy, State Takmil-ut-Tib College & Hospital, Lucknow, U.P. India

Abstract

The external nose, as a central anatomical feature of the face, carries significant aesthetic weight in the perception of facial harmony. The external structure of the nose, which is divided into nine aesthetic nasal subunits and six aesthetic nasal segments, presents a complex interplay of shapes and proportions that are critical to the overall appearance of the face. Given the significant role that the nose plays in facial aesthetics, it is important to understand how variations in nasal anatomy influence perceptions of beauty. The anatomical complexity of the nose is highlighted by the division into upper bony, middle, and lower cartilaginous vaults, each supplied by the facial artery and contributing uniquely to its appearance. For instance, the lower nasal base, lacking cartilaginous support, relies on skin, subcutaneous tissue, and nasal muscles to maintain its shape, highlighting the importance of a surgeon's understanding of these soft tissue components during aesthetic procedures. In the clinical or cosmetic evaluation of the external nose, palpation serves as a critical component, providing insight into underlying structural integrity and abnormalities that may not be immediately apparent through visual inspection alone. This tactile examination commences with an assessment of tip support, where the surgeon carefully applies pressure to determine the resilience and strength of the nasal tip, which plays a pivotal role in the overall appearance and function of the nose. In the meticulous analysis of the external nose, particularly when assessing the functional aspect, computer-assisted rhinomanometry has emerged as a critical tool. This technique, which is reliant on the recording of pressure differential and airflow, is essential in quantifying the degree of nasal obstruction, contributing significantly to the decision-making process in managing nasal deformities. This paper aims to explore the anatomical features of the external nose and their relationship to beauty standards, with a particular focus on understanding how variations in nasal shape and size influence perceptions of beauty. By examining the key anatomical structures of the external nose, we can gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to facial aesthetics and how these standards vary across different cultures.

Keywords: Facial aesthetics, External nose, Nasal aesthetics, Rhinomanometry, Augmentation rhinoplasty.

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INTRODUCTION

Facial aesthetics have been a topic of interest for centuries, with beauty standards varying widely across different cultures. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the role of the external nose in contributing to overall facial harmony and balance. For most people, the nose is the focal point of the face and its size and shape can have a major effect on how people perceive their beauty. As shown by both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, older people tend to possess bigger noses than younger people of the same sex and ethnic group [1-3]. In living persons, personal

identification greatly depends on facial characteristics [4]. The external nose, as a central anatomical feature of the face, carries significant aesthetic weight in the perception of facial harmony [5]. Recently, many surgeons have found that the most common request for aesthetic surgeries is the correction or adjustment of the external nose, which reflects the increasing attention of people to their nose beauty. The external structure of the nose, which is divided into nine aesthetic nasal subunits and six aesthetic nasal segments, presents a complex interplay of shapes and proportions that are critical to the overall appearance of the face [6]. In the field of facial reconstruction, a good approximation of nasal

morphology is particularly important for profile or three quarter views, even if no current method seems to produce sufficiently accurate estimates [7, 8]. Over the past two decades, facial plastic and reconstructive surgeons and some otolaryngologists have been developing many new and innovative techniques for both the amebiotic and traumatic deformities of the nose and the correction of the external nose to achieve the highest possible level of facial beauty. Therefore, knowledge of the normal nasal dimensions and shape is necessary for the timing of surgical reconstructions [9, 10, 11-15].

This paper aims to explore the anatomical features of the external nose and their relationship to beauty standards, with a particular focus on understanding how variations in nasal shape and size influence perceptions of beauty. By examining the key anatomical structures of the external nose, we can gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to facial aesthetics and how these standards vary across different cultures. Ultimately, this research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of the external nose in facial aesthetics and provide insights into how beauty standards are shaped by anatomical features.

Anatomical Features of the External Nose

The external nose is a midline protuberance located in the middle of the face, comprising of bone, cartilage, and skin [16]. It is divided into three units: frontal, lateral, and basal views [17]. The bony part of the nose shapes the nose root from the nasal, maxillae, and frontal bones. The external nose is composed of both cartilaginous and bony components [18]. The key anatomical structures of the external nose contribute to facial aesthetics, although the text does not specify what these structures are [19]. However, research has shown that the lateral and alar cartilages are important structures that form the lower, more flexible portion of the nose, contributing to facial aesthetics [16]. The nasal bridge is another key anatomical structure that contributes to facial aesthetics and is supported by the nasal bones [16]. The nasal bones have two additional bony articulations: the lacrimal bone superolateral and the nasomaxillary processes inferolaterally [17]. The nasofrontal angle, which varies with gender, is created between the nasal bones and frontal bone [17]. The external valve is also an important variable area that contributes to facial aesthetics, with its size, shape, and strength dependent on the lower lateral cartilage [20]. Ethnic influences can also impact the appearance of the nose, with different groups having different nasal shapes such as leptorrhine for Caucasians, platyrrhine for African Americans, para-leptorrhine for Hispanics, and sub-platyrrhine for Asians [20]. Overall, the external nasal anatomy is a pyramidal structure comprising various subunits such as the dorsum, sidewalls, hemi lobules, alae, soft triangles, and columella [20].

The appearance of the external nose is an essential aspect of facial aesthetics. The external nose can be divided into three topographic units, namely the frontal, lateral, and basal views. These units consist of several anatomical landmarks that contribute to the overall shape and size of the nose [17-19]. The nose is also divided into three areas: the upper, middle, and lower thirds. These areas are correlated with external surface landmarks, which are critical for determining nasal shape and size [21]. The external nose is composed of bone, cartilage, and skin. The nasal bridge is supported by the nasal bones, while the lower part, known as the nasal tip, is made up of cartilage. The nasal alae, which are located on either side of the nostrils, consist of skin and fibro-fatty tissue [16, 20]. All over the world, nasal dimensions have been investigated in several ethnic groups [1-3, 23-26]. Variations in nasal shape and size play a significant role in determining beauty standards across different cultures. For instance, in some cultures, a small and narrow nose is considered attractive, while in others, a broader and more prominent nose is preferred. The nasal cavity, which is the most cephalic part of the respiratory tract, communicates with the external environment via the anterior apertures and nostrils. Therefore, variations in nasal shape and size can affect breathing and overall health [22].

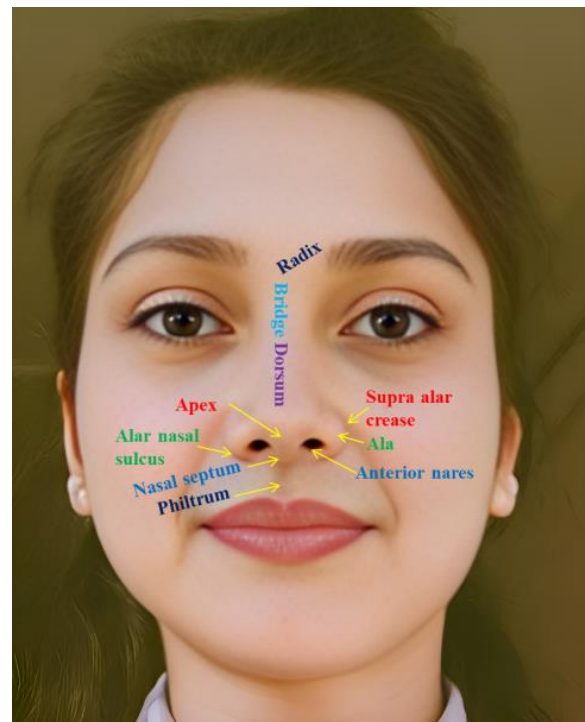


Figure 1: External Nose Features

Aesthetic importance of the external nose in facial harmony

Since the nose is a key component of the face's anatomy, it has a considerable aesthetic influence on how harmonious the entire face appears to be. Its role extends beyond mere physical appearance; it has a profound impact on an individual's psychological well-

being, with an ideally proportioned nose contributing to a sense of aesthetic and psychological balance [5, 27]. The oblique view, in particular, is instrumental in assessing the harmony of the nose with the rest of the facial features, allowing for a detailed examination of soft tissue facets, the lateral aspect of the nasal bones, nasal length, dorsal contour, and tip projection [27]. These elements are critical in evaluating the nose's contribution to the overall facial aesthetics, and even minor aberrations can significantly disrupt the perceived balance [5-27]. The unique characteristics of each individual's soft tissue and underlying skeletal structure mean that the nose can vary greatly from person to person, further emphasizing the need for a personalized approach when considering procedures like rhinoplasty to enhance facial harmony [28, 29].

Given the significant role that the nose plays in facial aesthetics, it is important to understand how variations in nasal anatomy influence perceptions of beauty. For instance, the lower nasal base, comprised of

various structures such as the alar base, columella, and nasal sill, contributes substantially to the nasal aesthetic by determining the shape and width of the nostrils as well as the angle between the nose and the upper lip [30]. Furthermore, the dynamic effects of nasal muscles cannot be overlooked as they significantly impact both functional and aesthetic outcomes, thus influencing perceptions of beauty [31]. Planned release or preservation of some nasal muscles during surgical interventions can improve nasal function and form, emphasizing the importance of tailored approaches to nasal anatomy in the pursuit of beauty [31]. Variations in these anatomical features, as seen in the differing nasal structures between ethnicities—for example, the longer nasal bone junction with the upper lateral cartilage in Caucasians compared to Asians—illustrate how even subtle differences in nasal anatomy can have a profound effect on perceived beauty.³¹ Hence, it is clear that nasal anatomy is intricately linked to aesthetic perceptions, with each structural element playing a pivotal role in the mosaic of facial beauty [29, 31].



Fig 2: External Nose

Cultural differences influence the standards of nasal aesthetics

The influence of cultural differences on nasal aesthetics cannot be understated, particularly when considering the significance placed on the nose as a central facial feature that essentially contributes to the identification of individuals and is perceived as an aesthetic landmark [27]. The anatomical complexity of the nose is highlighted by the division into upper bony, middle, and lower cartilaginous vaults, each supplied by the facial artery and contributing uniquely to its appearance [21]. However, the role of soft tissues is equally crucial; the dynamic function of nasal muscles and the interaction of skin with underlying structures determine both the static shape and the functional outcomes after rhinoplasty [31]. For instance, the lower nasal base, lacking cartilaginous support, relies on skin, subcutaneous tissue, and nasal muscles to maintain its shape, highlighting the importance of a surgeon's understanding of these soft tissue components during aesthetic procedures [30]. In different cultures, the aesthetic ideals for these anatomical features vary, with some societies favouring a more prominent bony structure while others may emphasize the softness and curvature of the cartilaginous elements. This cultural diversity demands that surgeons have a comprehensive knowledge of nasal anatomy and an appreciation for the patient's cultural background when planning and executing rhinoplasty to ensure outcomes that satisfy the aesthetic standards of the individual [32]. Thus, the cultural context in which nasal aesthetics are evaluated necessitates a tailored approach that respects the unique nasal features that are cherished within different ethnic groups, aligning surgical goals with the patient's aesthetic desires and cultural ideals [29].

Evaluation and Analysis of the External Nose

In the clinical or cosmetic evaluation of the external nose, palpation serves as a critical component, providing insight into underlying structural integrity and abnormalities that may not be immediately apparent through visual inspection alone [33]. The examination of the nasal tip begins with an evaluation of its support, where the surgeon applies careful pressure to assess its resilience and strength [34]. This is crucial as the nasal tip plays a vital role in both the overall appearance and

function of the nose. Additionally, the thickness of the skin-soft-tissue envelope is assessed during this process, as variations can have a significant impact on surgical planning and outcomes, especially in rhinoplasty procedures. Furthermore, the examination extends to the caudal end of the nose, which is an important factor in shaping and functioning of critical elements such as the columella, nares, and nasal valve angle. These elements are essential for proper nasal airway function. This comprehensive evaluation through palpation is essential as it helps identify potential issues like a drooping tip or weak lower lateral cartilages. It also ensures that any corrective measures taken, whether for aesthetic enhancement or functional improvement, are based on a thorough understanding of the patient's unique nasal structure [34].

In the meticulous analysis of the external nose, particularly when assessing the functional aspect, computer-assisted rhinomanometry has emerged as a critical tool. This method is instrumental in providing objective evidence for obstructed nasal breathing, a common complaint among patients seeking both medical and cosmetic nasal evaluations [33]. It not only establishes the presence of nasal obstruction but also aids in differentiating stenosis with an anatomical basis from dynamic stenosis and pseudo stenosis, thereby facilitating a more tailored therapeutic approach [33]. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of nasal airflow, four-phase rhinomanometry is employed, which meticulously determines intranasal pressure and flow alongside computing both log peak resistance and log effective resistance [33]. This technique, which is reliant on the recording of pressure differential and airflow, is essential in quantifying the degree of nasal obstruction, contributing significantly to the decision-making process in managing nasal deformities [33]. In selecting patients for nasal surgery, active anterior rhinomanometry is particularly beneficial as it incorporates a decongestion test, allowing surgeons to discern which cases would benefit from surgical intervention to improve nasal patency [33]. Together, these advanced diagnostic modalities enhance the precision of the clinical assessment and guide the formulation of a treatment plan aimed at restoring both the aesthetic appeal and the functional integrity of the external nose.

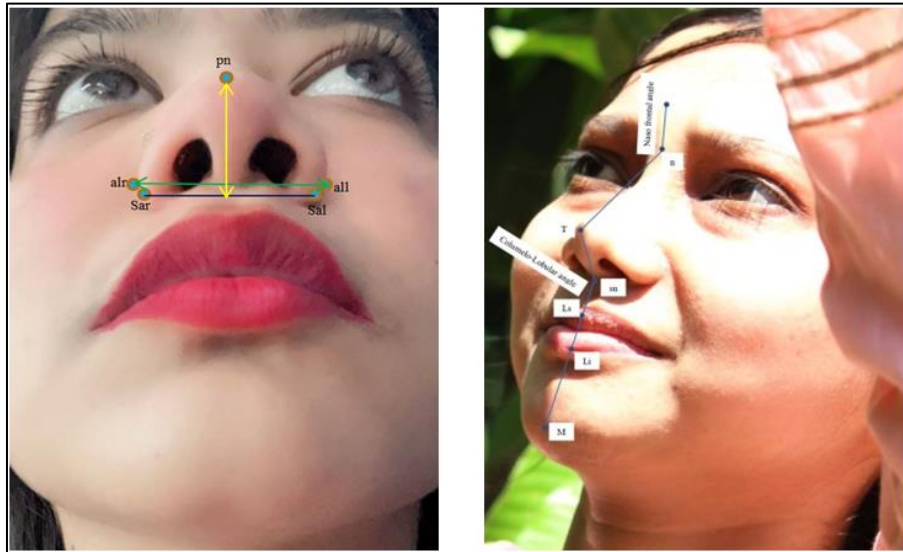


Fig 3: External Nose- Evaluation and Analysis

Surgical Techniques for Enhancing Nasal Beauty

Among the various surgical approaches for nasal enhancement, dorsal correction stands as the most frequently employed method [35]. This procedure is pivotal for achieving a nose that not only looks aesthetically pleasing but also blends naturally with the patient's other facial features. Surgeons take great care to respect and maintain the ethnic characteristics of the patient, ensuring that the outcome complements their unique facial contours. For instance, in populations such as Hispanic and Native American individuals, the surgical technique often involves refining the nasal tip while ensuring the nasal base is not overly narrowed, thus preserving the essential ethnic traits and contributing to a balanced and natural appearance [36]. This tailored approach underscores the importance of a surgeon's sensitivity to the diverse anatomical and cultural nuances present in nasal enhancement procedures.

Building on the surgical enhancements of the nasal airway and dorsal correction previously discussed, the aesthetic refinement of the nose is a nuanced endeavour that hinges upon intricate surgical techniques tailored to improve its surface appearance. Expertly crafted modifications, as described in the principle of geometric polygons, enable the surgeon to dissect the nose into aesthetic subunits, which simplifies the complex three-dimensional structure into manageable segments for meticulous refinement [37]. This concept is instrumental in both diagnosing deformities and crafting an operative plan that targets specific aesthetic goals such as optimal tip projection and rotation, which are particularly crucial in procedures like Indian rhinoplasty [37, 38]. These surgical techniques, refined through the experience gained from over 250 consecutive rhinoplasty, allow for the precise alteration of nasal structures, such as the tip area where less aggressive strategies that focus on cartilage shaping and strategic

graft placement have evolved, leading to an improved aesthetic appearance and better integration of the nose with the facial features [37, 39]. Indeed, the intricate balance achieved through these procedures underscores the importance of a deep understanding of nasal anatomy for successful rhinoplasty results [39].

Risks and considerations associated with nasal beauty surgeries

In addition to the aesthetic considerations of nasal beauty surgeries, there are significant functional and anatomical factors that must be addressed to ensure a successful outcome. One critical aspect is the patient's age and the development of nasal structures. Nasal beauty surgeries should not be undertaken until the nasal form has stabilized and ceased significant changes in shape and size, which is typically after the facial growth period has ended [39]. The ideal age for nasal beauty surgeries is generally around 17 years for males and approximately 15 years for females, ensuring that the nasal structures have fully developed and can sustain the alterations made during surgery [39]. Moreover, the thickness of the nasal skin is another vital consideration, as it significantly influences the surgical technique and outcome. Thicker skin requires a different approach compared to thinner skin types in nasal beauty surgeries, and surgeons must tailor their strategies to accommodate these individual characteristics to avoid complications and achieve aesthetically pleasing results [40]. Dr. Bustillo's expertise in Indian rhinoplasty illustrates the importance of customizing surgical procedures to respect the distinct characteristics of each individual's nose, ensuring that the ethnic identity is honoured while achieving the desired aesthetic goals [41].

Augmentation and Reduction Techniques

One of the primary decisions a surgeon must make when performing a rhinoplasty is whether to use an open or closed approach, both of which are common

techniques in the field of cosmetic surgery [35]. In a closed rhinoplasty, all of the surgical incisions are strategically placed inside the nostrils, thereby avoiding any visible scars and potentially reducing the recovery time for the patient [36]. This technique is favoured for its ability to minimize postoperative visible scarring and is considered less invasive compared to the open approach [36]. On the other hand, an open rhinoplasty involves a small bridging incision, called a trans-columellar incision, to connect the incisions in each nostril. This incision across the columella allows the skin to be lifted off the tip of the nose, providing the surgeon with better visibility and access to the underlying structures of the nose [36]. The choice between these techniques is typically based on the specific goals of the rhinoplasty, the complexity of the procedure, and the surgeon's preference. Regardless of the approach, the ultimate aim is to achieve a natural-looking result that harmonizes with the patient's facial features [37].

Rhinoplasty is a surgical procedure performed on the nose to improve nasal function and aesthetics. Augmentation and reduction techniques are commonly used in rhinoplasty, with each technique having its benefits. Augmentation rhinoplasty is typically performed to increase the projection of the nasal dorsum on the profile view, or to enhance the nasal bridge. This technique can be performed via an endonasal or an open rhinoplasty approach, depending on the complexity of the augmentation required [42, 43]. There are several methods for augmenting the nose, such as using transplants to recreate harmony by augmenting volume and protection [44]. Silicone implant augmentation rhinoplasty is another commonly used technique, especially in Oriental populations [45]. Mr. Leontsinis' method involves chopping up the rib and using the resulting shavings to augment the nose, which can be wrapped in fascia or other tissue before being inserted into the nose [46]. Augmentation rhinoplasty can also involve adjusting the nasal bridge to make the nose appear smaller or enhancing it to increase height using layered cartilage graft from the septum [47, 48]. The various techniques available for augmentation rhinoplasty make it possible for surgeons to tailor the procedure to each patient's unique needs and desired outcomes.

Post-operative considerations and care

After the initial consultation and the completion of the rhinoplasty procedure, the focus shifts to post-operative considerations and care, which are essential to ensure a successful recovery and satisfactory results [49]. It is vital that patients adhere strictly to the surgeon's post-surgery instructions, as these are designed to minimize complications and promote healing. Surgeons must emphasize the importance of waiting for up to 12 months before considering further surgery to allow for complete healing and the subsidence of residual swelling, which can affect the outcome [49]. During this

period, the patient's post-operative care should address both functional and aesthetic complications, as any issues in these areas can lead to significant social and psychological distress [39]. It is also critical for the surgical team to be informed promptly of any unexpected changes during the recovery process, as immediate action may prevent the escalation of complications [49]. Furthermore, careful monitoring for surgical complications such as haemorrhagic or infectious events is a crucial part of post-operative care, and this includes assessing the patient's history for risk factors like excessive bruising or bleeding and the use of substances that may impair the coagulation cascade [39]. In some cases, it may be necessary to suspend the use of certain drugs, vitamins, or supplements preoperatively to avoid exacerbating these risks [39]. Overall, comprehensive post-operative care, which considers both the risk of legal ramifications from complications and the patient's well-being, is indispensable for the favourable outcome of a rhinoplasty [39].

CONCLUSION

The appearance of the external nose is a crucial aspect of facial aesthetics, with variations in nasal anatomy playing a significant role in determining beauty standards across different cultures. The nose's role extends beyond physical appearance, as it also has a profound impact on an individual's psychological well-being and sense of balance. Surgeons must have a comprehensive understanding of nasal anatomy, including both the bony and cartilaginous components, as well as the cultural context in which nasal aesthetics are evaluated, in order to achieve optimal outcomes in procedures like rhinoplasty. Palpation and computer-assisted rhinomanometry are important tools in evaluating the external nose, while surgical techniques must be tailored to respect the unique anatomical and cultural characteristics of each patient.

In conclusion, the external nose plays a crucial role in facial aesthetics, with its size, shape, and proportions significantly impacting perceived beauty. Surgeons must consider the intricate anatomical structures of the nose, cultural influences, and individual variations to achieve harmonious and culturally sensitive outcomes in aesthetic procedures such as rhinoplasty.

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