FACIAL BONE CONTOURING

The face is basically a soft tissue representation of the underlying skeletal structure. Facial bone contouring is the surgical change in this bony support to produce a more aesthetic appearance. It is not only desirable to correct a particular deformity, but also to improve the entire aesthetic facial harmony. Correction in contour of the facial skeleton can be achieved by osteotomies or by augmenting the skeleton with bone or other materials. After a maxillary or mandibular repositioning, additional bone contouring is often necessary to correct slight asymmetries. Augmentation of such areas as the cheek, chin, or nose can be done in combination with osteotomies or alone.

Stereotypical appearances associated with particular disease processes can often be markedly improved by bony contouring. Patients with facial clefts commonly have a flat maxillary profile due to the deficiency of the facial skeleton over the front of the maxilla and the lower bony rims of the orbits. Contouring with graft materials can give a more normal appearance, thus removing some of the psychological stigmas associated with such deformities.

In many cases, however, facial contouring is requested by patients whose appearance falls well within the normal range. These individuals seek surgery to enhance their appearance, not to radically change it. Cheek augmentation is a good example. The aesthetic refinements of bony contouring used in combination with osteotomies when necessary allow the craniofacial surgeon to obtain the optimum aesthetic results.

Seventeen year old female with facial imbalance and notching of upper lip secondary to bilateral cleft lip and palate.

Postoperative result after Abbe Flap (lip switch) upper lip reconstruction, advancement of maxilla, chin, and rhinoplasty.