Abstract:

BACKGROUND: Nowadays, the array of methods for reconstruction of the female breast following mastectomy is vast. In this study, we investigate and compare quality of life after breast reconstruction and satisfaction with the results of two commonly used techniques (autologous tissue vs. expander/implant). METHODS: Ninety-one consecutive patients who underwent breast reconstruction at a German clinic between 1996 and 2001 were included in the study. Patient satisfaction and quality of life were assessed retrospectively using self-evaluation questionnaires. RESULTS: Patients were generally more satisfied with the outcome of the operation when autologous tissue was used. This was significant in the following areas: breast size, form, definition of the lower breast fold, softness of the breast, and symmetry of the breasts. In both groups the quality of life following breast reconstruction at least 2 years after the operation was equal to that of healthy women of the same age group. CONCLUSION: Although patients were more satisfied with the results of autologous breast reconstruction, procedure choice did not affect quality of life.