

woman's
OWN Dream bodies
Plastic surgery
Special

Plastic surgery real life

My breast looked like a huge wooden ball

As a student, Sefi Mumoz was tempted by a cut-price boob job. Here she reveals what happened when her implants went terribly wrong – and her desperate battle to get them put right.

Most women, it would seem Sefi Mumoz had it all. A career as a tennis coach, with a winning body to match, and her fair share of male admirers. Yet Sefi was deeply unhappy. I hated my breasts and longed for implants, she recalls. My breasts were beautiful until my late teens, but because I'd played tennis, they'd suffered horrendously. All that running around on a hard court had really taken its toll. Even with the support of a sports bra, my breasts had ended up, floppy and covered in stretch marks. By the time I was 28 they just hung like two empty sacs and I couldn't bear to see my reflection in a mirror. If there was a boob job was my only option. It was to prove a disastrous decision. Two painful operations and countless consultations later, Sefi has finally got the breasts she'd always dreamed about. But it has cost her dearly.

I made the ultimate mistake of trying to do it 'on the cheap' when I should have known better. Sefi, now 32, admits. I ended up with painful, mismatched boobs which totally robbed me of my self-esteem. Sefi, who grew up in Seville, Spain, had come to London in 1997 to study English and dance. She managed her course with well-paying jobs, and money was tight. For almost a decade I'd wanted a boob job, but there was never any money spare, she explains. Then my grandmother died and left me £22,000 in her will. I knew precisely what I was going to do with it. I saw three different cosmetic surgeons in London and they



Flat chested (top), the bodge job (above), and the new boobs (right)

quoted me between £3,000 and £3,500 for implants. Even with my savings, I didn't have nearly enough. Then, through a friend, Sefi heard about a plastic surgeon in Alicante, Spain, who could perform the op at a discounted price. My friend's mother had had a nose job, and a couple of her friends had had implants, and they were all perfectly happy. He charged around £1,500 for implants. I could fly to Alicante, have the operation, stay with my friend and recuperate in the sun. What could be better? After a series of telephone calls to the surgeon, Sefi flew out to meet

him. I liked him immediately, she recalls. He was really sympathetic. He told me I could have silicone implants which would take me from an 'empty' 34B to my original 34C. I stressed I wanted firmer, natural-looking breasts, not huge balloons.

He explained that all anaesthetics carry a degree of risk but, apart from that, there wouldn't be any problems. It all seemed so straightforward, and I had total confidence in him.

Two days later, Sefi had the operation in a private hospital in Alicante. Once the initial swelling had gone down, she was thrilled with her new breasts. They were exactly as he'd described them. They were really beautiful. A delighted Sefi flew back to London. I went back to see the surgeon twice before I left – once to have the stitches taken out and again for a check-up. There was no hint of what was to come.

Eight months later Sefi was mortified to find her left breast had gone rock hard. It was like a big wooden ball, totally solid, and looked completely different to the right one. Alarmed, Sefi immediately rang her surgeon in Spain. He said it was probably just hormonal.

He suggested I wait a few weeks for things to settle down, before calling him again. When things didn't improve, a frightened Sefi flew to her local A&E department in South London. There, a doctor didn't want to fix the disfigure. I'd waited for five hours, and when I finally saw him, the doctor took one look at my mismatched breasts and said, 'If you want to cut implants in your body, that's your problem. I'm here to save

lives.' I just burst into tears. I was terrified that my boobs would never look normal again.

It was a similar story at the next hospital, where doctors were equally dismissive. I went to six different hospitals, every one was the same, says Sefi. In desperation, she scraped together her air fare and flew back to Spain.

The surgeon who had performed my op told me I was suffering from encapsulation, where excess tissue had built up around the implant causing it to harden.

He then tried to massage the implant by hand in an effort to break the tissue 'capsule'. He tried a few times, but in the end I had to ask him to stop – it was just too painful.

The surgeon then said he had to re-open Sefi's scar to remove part of the hardened tissue. This was done in his office, under a local anaesthetic.

I was in a dreadful state, says Sefi. I was so scared, and I left his surgery in floods of tears.

Although there was a slight improvement to the shape of my left breast, it was still much harder, and lower than my right, and I had a funny gap in my cleavage. My boobs looked like an odd pair. Yet when I mentioned this to the surgeon, he just said it was all my imagination. He was very dismissive – it was clear he wanted to wash his hands of me.

Understandably, Sefi's confidence hit rock bottom. I'd hated my breasts before, but now I was distraught. I couldn't bear my boyfriend to see me without my clothes on.

I went to see my GP but he warned me that even if I was eligible for treatment on the NHS, there was no



guarantee I'd end up with a surgeon who specialised in breast operations, and I could easily end up worse off.

By now I'd noticed signs of my right breast beginning to harden. I felt desperate, deformed, and abandoned. What made it worse was knowing I only had myself to perform the surgery. I went to see at least a dozen surgeons. Some were unwilling to do the operation because I had not been their patient, and others were totally unempathetic.

Then Sefi heard about Angelica Kavouri, a Harley Street surgeon, who specialised in breast operations. The first time I went to see her I immediately felt she understood me. Perhaps being another woman, she could relate to what I'd been through. Angelica told me she could insert them above, which would make them less likely to encapsulate.

She did warn me, though, that I'd be in a lot of pain after the op, and my breasts would take a few weeks to settle down into a normal shape.

Undeterred, Sefi went ahead with the new procedure, costing £4,500. In February this year, when she came round, she was horrified to be told that the original implants had leaked – probably as a result of the Spanish surgeon trying to break up the hardened tissue.

I was extremely lucky that the breast hadn't become infected, says Sefi. Instead, once the initial swelling had gone down, my new boobs were in great shape.

Sefi is delighted to have finally resolved her problems, though the scars of what happened will haunt her for some time to come.

I'd advise anyone considering surgery to think long and hard before deciding to go ahead. Also, it's probably fair to say you get what you pay for. My problems started months after the op, and I needed a surgeon who was close at hand, and totally committed to aftercare.

A cut-price deal is very tempting, but it may end up costing you a lot more in the long run.

Angelica Kavouri, 129 Harley St, London W1. Tel: 020 7466 9040.

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