

SATISFACTION WITH HEAD AND NECK SCAR APPEARANCE IN LATIN AMERICAN PATIENTS. A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Introduction

Surgical treatment leaves patients with a visible scar. Surgical scars are important for patients and have been related to poor quality of life. Some studies have demonstrated that characteristics, such as hypertrophic aspect and adherence to subcutaneous tissue, are important for defining patient satisfaction with scars. For Latin American patients, the number of studies is scarce.

Objectives

To describe the self-assessment of patient scars using the PSAQ in a cohort of Latin-American patients who underwent head and neck surgery and to determine differences between clinical and therapeutic characteristics and to define the most relevant factor that affects scar appearance.

Materials and methods

This is a descriptive cross-sectional study approved by the Ethics in Research Committee of the Fundacion Colombiana de Cancerologia- Clinica Vida. The Spanish version of the PSAQ with 39 questions and five subscales (appearance, symptoms, consciousness, satisfaction with appearance, and satisfaction with symptoms) that score patient perceptions on a scale of 1 to 4 points (with 1 point assigned to the most favorable category and 4 points assigned to the least favorable category) was used.

Table 1. Patient characteristics	Number	%
Age	49±15*	20-86**
Sex (female)	144	80
Comorbidity (yes)	94	52.2
Type of surgery		
Thyroidectomy	124	68.9
Thyroidectomy + RMND	35	19.4
RMND	11	6.1
Parotidectomy	7	3.9
Parathyroidectomy	3	1.7
Reoperation	10	5.6
Time from surgery (months)		
0-3	115	63.9
3-6	30	16.7
6-12	22	12.2
>12	13	7.2
Wound complications	17	9.4

Adult patients who underwent elective head and neck surgery were included. The following patients were excluded: those with reading, hearing or cognitive difficulties; those with previous radiotherapy neck treatment; and those who did not consent to participate.

A descriptive analysis was performed. Multivariate analysis using a forward logistic regression was planned to assess the weight of specific subscale items on the overall subscale score for appearance and satisfaction

Results

A total of 180 patients were recruited. Table 1 shows the demographic and clinical data.

The items with the less favorable results were length (regular/bad 38.3%) followed by color (19.4%). The global appearance was classified as excellent/good in 72.2% of patients.

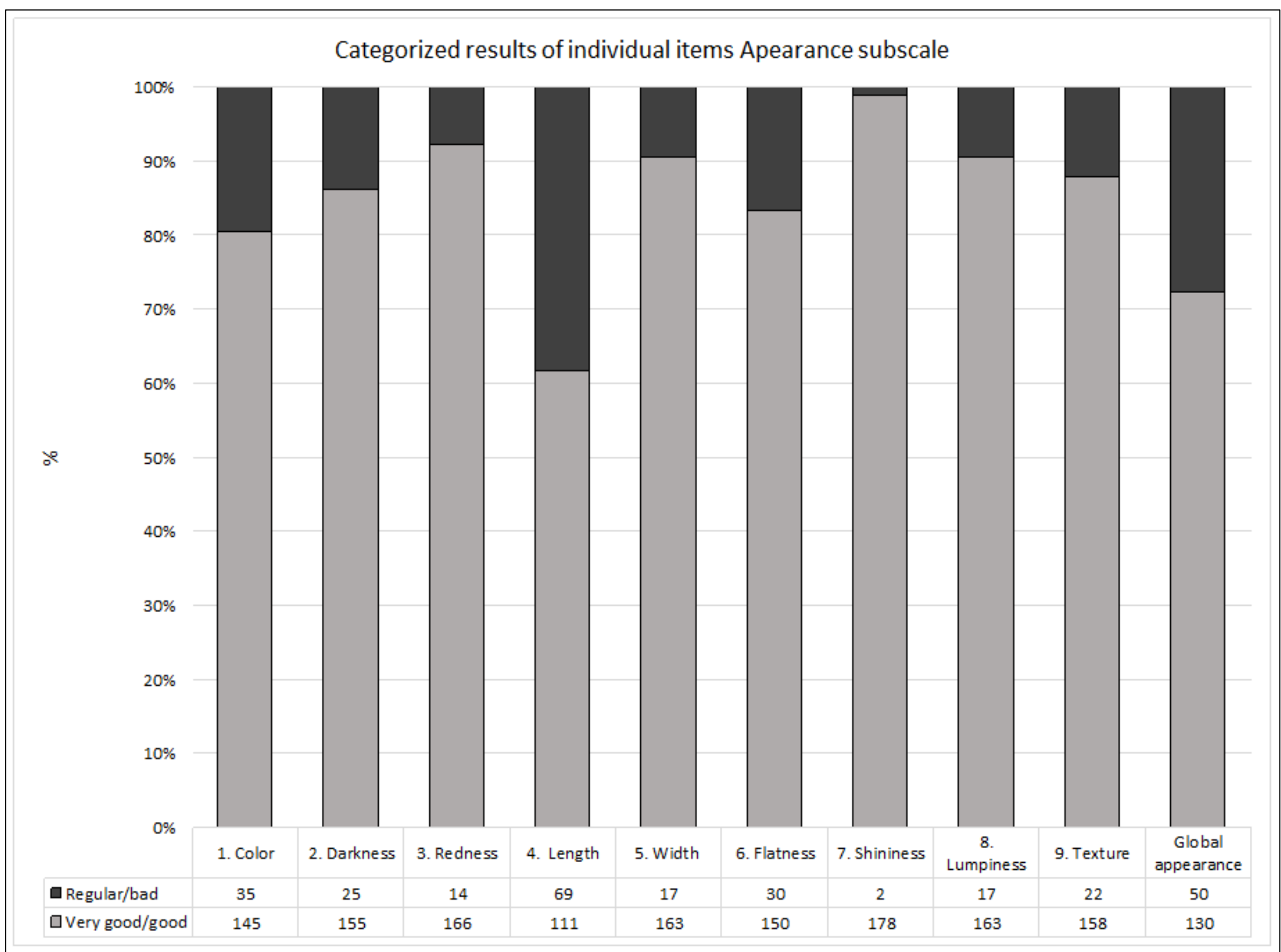


Figure 1. Appearance subscale

The items with the least favorable results in terms of scar appearance satisfaction were satisfaction with length (13.9%) followed by satisfaction with color (10.6%). Global scar appearance satisfaction was classified as excellent/good in 87.8% of patients.

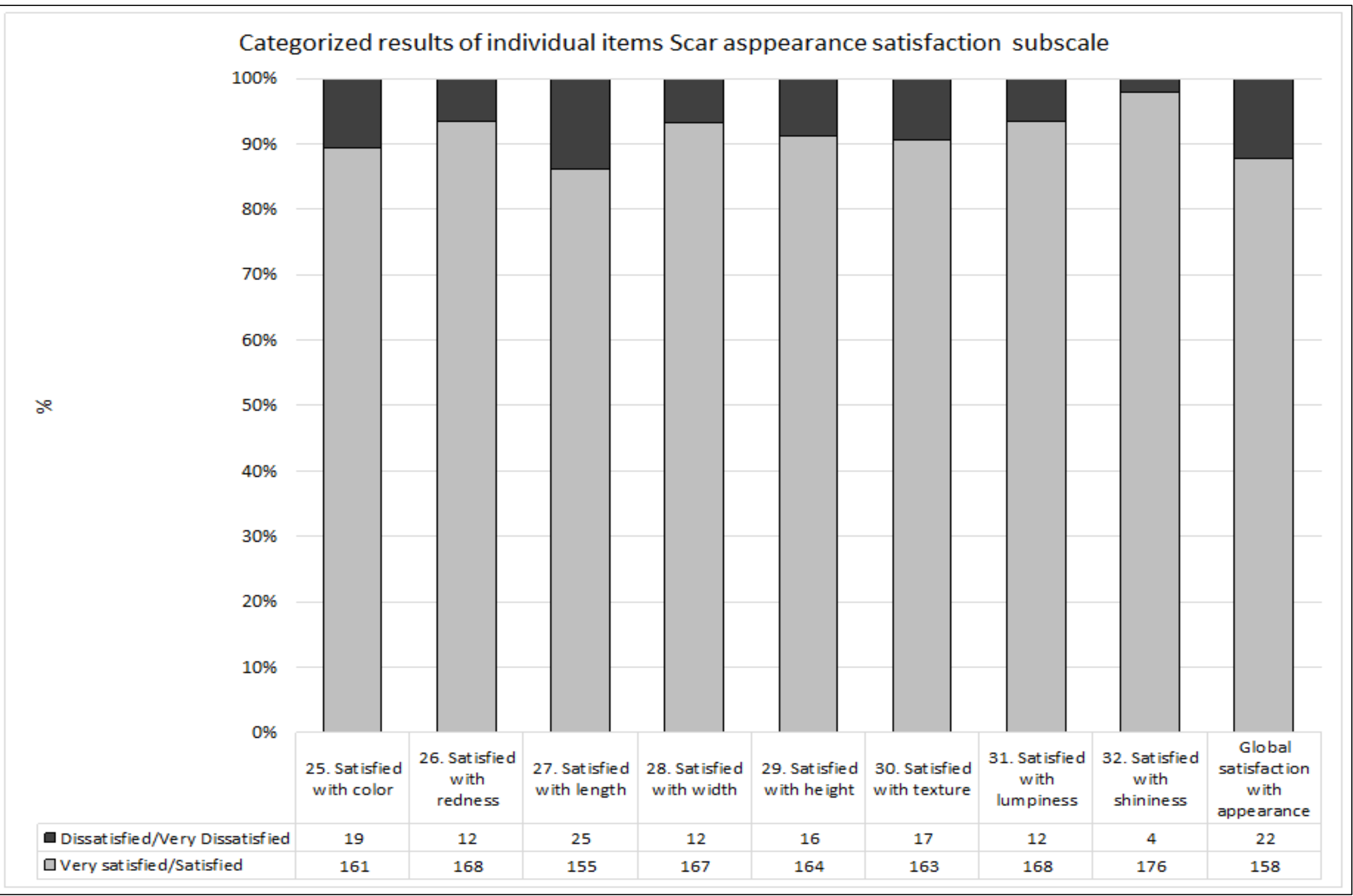


Figure 2. Scar appearance satisfaction

The adjusted logistic regression showed that color (OR 5.9, 95% CI 1.7-20.8), width (OR 58.9 (4.3-807.6) and flatness (OR 5.7 (1.3-23.6) were the items statistically associated with a regular/bad result in the appearance subscale.

Conclusion

There is a high level of satisfaction with head and neck scar appearance. The intrinsic characteristics of scars are the most relevant factors for defining scar satisfaction, and interventions to modify these conditions must be encouraged in order to improve the esthetic aspect of scars.