



Conference Aotearoa
2003

Third Conference of the International Society of Critical Health Psychology

Spencer on Byron Hotel, Takapuna
Auckland, New Zealand
10-12 April, 2003

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Thursday 10th April, 2003

Room	Pacific	Kestrel	Tasman
8.45-9.30	Welcome		
9.30-10.30	Keynote address: It's all in the mind (yeah right): Recovering from colonisation and oppression. <i>Linda Tuhiwai Smith</i>		
10.30-11.00	Morning tea		
11.00-12.00	Paper session: Embodiment	Paper session: Sexuality A	Paper session: Grief & dying
12.00-1.00	Lunch		
1.00-2.30	Symposium: The body in sickness and in health: Feminist perspectives	Paper session: Contextualising Health	Paper session: Smoking/ADHD
2.30-3.00	Afternoon tea		
3.00-4.00	Paper session: Women & health	Paper session: Subjectivity	Paper session: Chronic illness

Evening: 6.30pm Group restaurant parties, meet back at hotel by 9.30pm for The Debate (Tasman Room)

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Friday 11th April, 2003

	Pacific	Kestrel
8.30-10.00	KTS: Images of health	KTS: Critical health psychology
10.00-10.30	Morning tea	
10.30-12.00	Symposium: Health communication	Paper session: Health Promotion
12.00-1.00	Lunch	
1.00-2.00	Keynote address: What's the point of 'rethinking' health psychology? <i>Michele Crossley</i>	
2.00-3.00	Paper session: Alcohol and Drug Use	Paper session: Sexuality B
3.00-3.30	Afternoon tea	

Evening: 6.00-7.30 pre-dinner drinks, Kapa Haka; 7.30 Conference dinner & jazz band

Saturday 12th April, 2003

	Pacific	Kestrel
9.00-10.30	KTS: Sexuality, gender and health	KTS: Medicalisation
10.30-11.00	Morning tea	
11.00-12.30	Paper session: Food	Paper session: Parenthood & assisted conception
12.30-1.30	Lunch	
1.30-2.30	Keynote address: Value-based praxis for personal, relational and collective wellness: Towards psychopolitical validity <i>Isaac Prilleltensky</i>	
2.30-3.30	Wrap-up	
3.30-4.00	Afternoon tea	

Conference ends

PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

Thursday 10th April, 2003: Morning Programme

Room	Pacific	Kestrel	Tasman
8.45-9.30	Welcome		
9.30-10.30	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: IT'S ALL IN THE MIND (YEAH RIGHT): RECOVERING FROM COLONISATION AND OPPRESSION Linda Tuhiwai Smith, University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ		
10.30-11.00	Morning tea		
11.00-12.00	<p>PAPER SESSION: EMBODIMENT Chair: G. Braun</p> <p>Embodying technologies M. MacLachlan <i>University of Dublin, Ireland</i></p> <p>Words that speak: Methods of discourse analysis for researching embodied experience V. Grace <i>University of Canterbury, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Painting pictures of embodied experience: The use of non-linguistic data in the study of embodiment V. Gillies,¹ A. Harden², K. Johnson³, P. Reavey¹, V. Strange² & C. Willig⁴ ¹<i>South Bank University, London, UK</i> ²<i>Institute of Education, London, UK</i> ³<i>University of Brighton, UK</i> ⁴<i>City University, London, UK</i></p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: SEXUALITY A Chair: P. Corcoran</p> <p>'Viagra stories': NZ men and women challenge ideas about 'sexual dysfunction' A. Potts¹, N. Gavey², V. Grace¹ & T. Vares¹ ¹<i>University of Canterbury, Aotearoa NZ</i> ²<i>University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>In the shadow of the magic bullet: Potential adverse effects for women partners of men who use viagra A. Potts¹, N. Gavey², V. Grace¹ & T. Vares¹ ¹<i>University of Canterbury, Aotearoa NZ</i> ²<i>University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Medicalising sex: Sex therapy and the construction of 'desire disorders' B. Guerin <i>University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: GRIEF AND DYING Chair: M. Breheny</p> <p>Rational and emotional persons: the ideal and the real in patients' decision-making at the end of life J. Elliott & I. Olver <i>Royal Adelaide Hospital</i> <i>University of Adelaide, Australia</i></p> <p>The relevance and implications of the assumptions and social norms concerning grief L. Breen, M. O'Connor, & C. Sonn <i>Edith Cowan University, Australia</i></p>
12.00-1.00	Lunch		

PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

Thursday 10th April, 2003: Afternoon Programme 1pm-3pm

Room	Pacific	Kestrel	Tasman
1.00-2.30	<p>SYMPOSIUM: THE BODY IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES Convenor: S Wilkinson Chair: P Choi</p> <p>Muscularity and masculinity: Maintaining visible differences between women and men P. Y.L Choi <i>Victoria University, Australia</i></p> <p>The conflicted self and the sick body: Gender, resistance and adaptation in people with multiple sclerosis P. Nicolson <i>Sheffield University, UK</i></p> <p>Justifying the 'designer vagina': Arguments for female genital cosmetic surgery V. Braun <i>University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>"All my womanhood was taken away": Women's talk about appearance, femininity and sexuality following mastectomy S. Wilkinson (V. Braun to present) <i>Simon Fraser University, Canada</i></p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: CONTEXTUALISING HEALTH Chair: S. Baker</p> <p>Talking about textual responsibilities J. Cherrington <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>What do you get when you cross a poststructuralist with a gangster? Theorising practices of critical health psychology within a specific community. L. Coombes, <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Acculturation of the disconnected B. Borell <i>Massey University, Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Constructing biopsychosocial health: A few South African stories K. Botha <i>Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, South Africa</i></p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: SMOKING / APHASIOLOGY / ADHD Chair: L. Breen</p> <p>"I don't know whether my life changed but...": Reconstructing identity through quitting smoking <u>M. Worrell</u>¹, M. Maguire² & P. Collins¹ ¹<i>University of Luton, UK</i> ²<i>University of Westminster, UK</i></p> <p>Greek smokers' experiences of disapproval of smoking in Greece and the UK <u>P. Louka</u>, M. Maguire & P. Evans <i>University of Westminster, UK</i></p> <p>Aphasiology meets health psychology: Reflections on a relationship. <u>M. Bevin</u> & C. Stephens <i>Massey University, Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Boys and ADHD <u>V. Dennington</u> & A. LeCouteur <i>University of Adelaide, Australia</i></p>
2.30-3.00	Afternoon tea		

Thursday afternoon programme continues over page

PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

Thursday 10th April, 2003: Afternoon Programme 3pm-4pm

Room	Pacific	Kestrel	Tasman
3.00-4.00	<p>PAPER SESSION: WOMEN AND HEALTH Chair: K. Johnson</p> <p>Menopause and the virtuous woman: The importance of the social 'soup' in HRT decision making C. Stephens & M. Breheny <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Health and aging: Physical activity as a means of empowerment for active elderly Francophone women <u>H. Dallaire</u>¹, J. Roma¹, G. Rail¹, S. Laberge² & P. Voyer³ ¹<i>University of Ottawa</i> ²<i>Université de Montréal</i> ³<i>Université Laval</i></p> <p>Gender and organisational culture: Effects of marginality on women's health J. Palermo <i>Victoria University, Australia</i></p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: SUBJECTIVITY Chair: L. Coombes</p> <p>Rewriting the subject: A critical approach to subjectivity within health psychology D.W. Riggs <i>University of Adelaide, Australia</i></p> <p>Naughty but nice! Authenticity, agency and action W. Stainton Rogers <i>The Open University, UK</i></p> <p>On compassion as a healing value M. Morgan <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: CHRONIC ILLNESS Chair: J. Kivits</p> <p>Discourses of breast cancer prevention and risk management in popular media <u>S. Crabb</u> & A. LeCouteur <i>University of Adelaide, Australia</i></p> <p>Living with diabetes in rural and urban Ghana: a critical social psychological examination of illness action and scope for intervention and policy development A. de-Graft Aikens, <i>London School of Economics, UK</i></p> <p>Socially desirable responding amongst patients with rheumatoid arthritis: What does a decrease over time tell us? <u>G.J. Treharne</u>¹, A.C. Lyons², D.A. Booth³ & G.D. Kitas⁴ ¹<i>University of Birmingham, UK</i> ²<i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i> ⁴<i>University of Birmingham and Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, UK</i></p>

Evening programme: sign up to a restaurant group during the day
 6.20pm meet in foyer
 6.30pm groups led to restaurants
 9.30pm the Debate at the hotel "*I am nothing if not critical*" (Tasman Room)

PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

Friday 11th April, 2003: Morning Programme

Room	Pacific	Kestrel
8.30-10.00	<p>KEY TOPIC SYMPOSIUM 1: IMAGES OF HEALTH Convenor: Helene Joffe</p> <p>Imagery and health: what has health psychology to say? H. Joffe <i>University College London, UK</i></p> <p>The study of images in health-related research: a critical note A. Radley <i>Loughborough University, UK</i></p> <p>Critical Health Psychology, images of illness, and the continued medicalization of media research agendas D. Hodgetts¹ & A. Radley², A. Cullen¹, ¹<i>London School of Economics, UK</i>; ²<i>Loughborough University, UK</i></p> <p>Images of health outlined by professionals: The case of doctors and nurses U. Flick, <i>Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences, Germany</i></p>	<p>KEY TOPIC SYMPOSIUM 2: CRITICAL HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY Convenor: David Marks</p> <p>A community psychological D. Fryer, <i>University of Stirling, UK</i> (D. F. Marks to present)</p> <p>What makes critical health psychology critical? D.F. Marks, <i>City University, London, UK</i></p> <p>Living in a material world: reflections on the societal context of health psychology M. Murray¹ & C. Campbell² ¹<i>Memorial University, St. John's, NL, Canada</i> ²<i>LSE, UK</i></p> <p>Critical health psychology needs psychopolitical validity I. Prilleltensky, <i>Vanderbilt University, USA</i></p> <p>Discourses in the EC's Health Promotion Programme C.M. Sykes, C. Willig & D. Marks, <i>City University, London, UK</i></p>
10.00-10.30	Morning tea	
10.30-12.00	<p>SYMPOSIUM: HEALTH COMMUNICATION Convenors: D. Hodgetts & A. Radley Chair: A. Radley</p> <p>Visualizing madness – the sub-text in media depictions of mental illnesses R. Nairn, <i>University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Digital life stories and challenges to health care M. Hardey, <i>University of Southampton, UK</i></p> <p>Understanding the 'informed patient': Health, (online) information, the self J. Kivits, <i>London School of Economics, UK</i></p> <p>Mediation and the imaging of homelessness in London A. Cullen¹, D. Hodgetts¹ & A. Radley² ¹<i>London School of Economics, UK</i>; ²<i>Loughborough University, UK</i></p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: HEALTH PROMOTION Chair: G. Treharne</p> <p>"New Resiliency" and its relevance for youth well-being T. McCreanor, <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Making the healthy choice the easy choice: Sexuality education and the concept of 'choice' in New Zealand secondary schools V. Inch, <i>University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Overcoming barriers in HIV/AIDS prevention amongst young people M.J. Visser, <i>University of Pretoria, South Africa</i></p> <p>A multifaceted approach to AIDS intervention: a South African perspective L. Strauss and M.C. Marchetti-Mercer <i>University of Pretoria, South Africa</i></p>
12.00-1.00	Lunch	

PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

Friday 11th April, 2003: Afternoon Programme

	Pacific	Kestrel
1.00-2.00	KEYNOTE ADDRESS: WHAT'S THE POINT OF 'RETHINKING' HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY? Michele Crossley, Manchester University, UK	
2.00-3.00	<p>PAPER SESSION: ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE Chair: C. Willig</p> <p>Social representations: selective re-presentation in a group-task dynamic P. Corcoran & D.F. Marks City University, London, UK</p> <p>"Downing the liqueur": Representations of young women's and men's drinking behaviour A.C. Lyons¹ & S.I. Dalton² ¹Massey University, Aotearoa NZ ²University of Birmingham, UK</p> <p>Alcohol consumption and gender identity S. Willott Staffordshire University, UK</p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: SEXUALITY B Chair: D. Riggs</p> <p>Framing gay men's health: A critical review of policy documents J. Adams University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</p> <p>Crafting gender through medical technologies: corporeality as resource and as constraint S. Pibbs Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</p> <p>An unhealthy silence: Non-consensual sex among men who have sex with men J. Fenaughty University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</p>
3.00-3.30	Afternoon tea	

Afternoon programme: 3.30-6.00pm relax.....swim at Takapuna beach, shop at Takapuna shops, sleep, chill

Evening programme: 6.00pm Pre-dinner drinks beside the Spencer & Byron tennis courts, Floor 3 *Sponsored by Massey University School of Psychology*
6.30pm Kapa Haka group
7.30pm conference dinner and jazz band, in Pacific & Kestrel rooms

PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

Saturday 12th April, 2003: Morning Programme to 11.00am

Room	Pacific	Kestrel
9.00-10.30	<p>KEY TOPIC SYMPOSIUM 3: SEXUALITY, GENDER AND HEALTH Convenor: Paula Nicolson</p> <p>Centering on women's experiences: Menstrual cycle research and health A. J. Dan, <i>University of Illinois, USA</i></p> <p>Representations of orgasm in three generations of women M. Lavie, <i>University College London, UK</i></p> <p>Women's 'normal' heterosexual desire P. Nicolson & J. Burr, <i>Sheffield University, UK</i></p> <p>'Dear Girlfriend...': Sexual health narratives in a teenage magazine S. Jackson, <i>Victoria University of Wellington, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Babies don't come with a manual: negotiating new motherhood P. Y L Choi¹, C. Henshaw² & S. Baker² ¹<i>Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia</i> ²<i>Keele University, UK</i></p> <p>"I felt as though I'd been in jail": Exploring the role of health professionals in women's experiences of maternity care S.R. Baker¹, P. Y.L. Choi² & C. Henshaw¹ ¹<i>Keele University, UK</i> ²<i>Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia</i></p> <p>Gender differences in depressive symptoms: The role of daily hassles, coping styles, social support and personal mastery S. Bhatia & S. Dey, <i>University of Delhi, India</i></p>	<p>KEY TOPIC SYMPOSIUM 4: MEDICALISATION Convenor: Hank Stam</p> <p>Medicalisation in a global context H. Stam, <i>University of Calgary, Canada</i></p> <p>Socio-medicalizing HIV/AIDS: Integrating a social, behavioral and medical intervention for women at risk in Siem Reap/Angkor Wat, Cambodia I. Lubek, et al., <i>University of Guelph, Canada</i></p> <p>The politics of medicalisation: HIV treatments and the uncertainties of neoliberal subjectivities N. Stephenson, <i>University of Western Sydney, Australia</i></p> <p>The medicalisation of food in contemporary society K. Chamberlain, <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>"Choose your disease": Hormone replacement therapy and the medicalisation of women at midlife and beyond A. C. Lyons, <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p>
10.30-11.00	Morning tea	

PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

Saturday 12th April, 2003: 11.00am til end

Room	Pacific	Kestrel
11.00-12.30	<p>PAPER SESSION: FOOD Chair: M. Murray</p> <p>A rhetorical approach to discussions about health and vegetarianism <u>A. Weatherall</u> & M. Wilson <i>Victoria University of Wellington, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Nutritional health messages: A conflictual space for women H. Madden <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>Science and morality in women's talk about dietary supplementation A. Fergus & K. Chamberlain <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>"When so and so told me I was bulimic I went, woohoo I've got something!": Negotiating eating disorder labels, practices and identities M. Burns <i>University of Auckland, Aotearoa NZ</i></p>	<p>PAPER SESSION: PARENTHOOD AND ASSISTED CONCEPTION Chair: Tim McCreanor</p> <p>Defective, contagious and expensive: Constructions of adolescent motherhood in the literature for health professionals <u>M. Breheny</u> & C. Stephens <i>Massey University, Aotearoa NZ</i></p> <p>A link of a different kind: the narrative meaning of sperm donation M. Kirkman <i>University of Melbourne, Australia</i></p> <p>Not being genetically mine: Narratives from recipients of donated eggs and embryos M. Kirkman <i>University of Melbourne, Australia</i></p>
12.30-1.30	Lunch	
1.30-2.30	<p>KEYNOTE ADDRESS: VALUE-BASED PRAXIS FOR PERSONAL, RELATIONAL AND COLLECTIVE WELLNESS: TOWARDS PSYCHOSOCIAL VALIDITY Isaac Prilleltensky, Vanderbilt University, USA</p>	
2.30-3.30	Wrap-up	
3.30-4.00	Afternoon tea	

Third Conference of the International Society of Critical Health Psychology
(Takapuna, New Zealand, 10-12 April, 2003)

Proposal for a themed symposium

Title:

"The Body in Sickness and in Health: Feminist Perspectives"

Convener/Chair:

Sue Wilkinson, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Participants:

- Virginia Braun, Department of Psychology, University of Auckland, New Zealand
- Precilla Y L Choi, School of Human Movement, Recreation and Performance, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia
- Paula Nicolson, SCHARR, Sheffield University, UK
- Sue Wilkinson, Department of Women's Studies, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Papers:

- 1) Muscularity and masculinity: Maintaining visible differences between women and men (Precilla Y L Choi)
- 2) The conflicted self and the sick body: Gender, resistance and adaptation in people with multiple sclerosis (Paula Nicolson)
- 3) "All my womanhood was taken away": Women's talk about appearance, femininity and sexuality following mastectomy (Sue Wilkinson)
- 4) Justifying the 'designer vagina': Arguments for female genital cosmetic surgery (Virginia Braun)

Structure/Time requested:

4 papers, followed by a discussion period:
2hrs 30 mins

Summary/Overview of Symposium:

The condition and appearance of our physical bodies underpins our lived experience of health and illness, profoundly influencing whether we feel (or are defined as) 'healthy' or whether we feel (or are defined as) 'sick'. There are strong cultural prescriptions about what the body 'should' look like and how it should 'perform' in everyday life. When we do not meet these prescriptions, we may feel 'ugly', 'abnormal', or 'unfeminine/unmasculine', and experience problems in accepting our physical 'difference' from the cultural norm. Particular difficulties may be faced by those who experience a substantial difference or deviation from the cultural norm - for instance, following non-elective, body-altering surgery (e.g. mastectomy for breast cancer) or in conditions involving overall physical deterioration of the body (e.g.

multiple sclerosis). The papers in this symposium draw on critical, feminist research on the body from across three continents. Although each focusing on different aspects of the body, all of the papers highlight the way in which we experience our bodies as gendered (i.e. as feminine or masculine), and how this impacts upon the way we promote health and 'manage' sickness. It may affect, for example, whether we seek to develop muscularity, or simply muscle tone, through physical exercise; or whether, and under what circumstances, we seek out cosmetic surgery for genital 'reshaping'. Likewise, the papers show how our experience of our bodies as feminine or masculine may influence the ways in which we explain the cause of illness (to ourselves or to others), and also the ways in which we attempt to cope with it.

Paper no. 1

Muscularity and masculinity: Maintaining visible differences between women and men

Precilla Y L Choi
Victoria University, Australia

Cultural analyses have revealed that nearly every civilisation has sought to impose a uniform shape upon the female form and what this ideal is changes over time. The cultural acceptance of physical exercise as a desirable lifestyle behaviour has also been influential such that it is now not enough for the modern woman's body to be thin, it must also be firm and well toned. However, 'excessive' female muscular development must be resisted remaining at the level of muscle tone, not muscle size or bulk. Thus, thinness remains the Western feminine ideal of beauty. On the other hand, a larger more muscular body appears to have become an ideal of masculine beauty. Analyses of media representations have revealed that images of men's bodies have become considerably more muscular of late. In addition, recent studies have found that men desire a more muscular body for themselves. This paper will argue that these differing views of female and male muscularity are part of a biological determinism that seeks to resist challenges to the patriarchal gender order. Moreover, muscles are culturally more powerful because unlike chromosomes or hormones, they are a more visible biological entity.

Paper no. 2:

The conflicted self and the sick body: Gender, resistance and adaptation in people with multiple sclerosis

Paula Nicolson
Sheffield University, UK

This paper reports on a focus group study of 7 men and 11 women all of whom had been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), and all of whom were currently having difficulty managing their everyday tasks as a result of physical deterioration. The psychosocial features of MS have been well documented and include the impact of the disease on the person's personal life and plans, self-confidence and self-esteem, their

families and future prospects of employment. The specific clinical features of this chronic disabling disease, which attacks the central nervous system, however mean that many of the symptoms of multiple sclerosis are subjective, particularly the sensory symptoms. There is thus a great deal of fear surrounding an MS diagnosis, which can be identified in the way the respondents talked about their bodies in the time leading up to a diagnosis and the immediate post-diagnosis period. The study reported here showed how the fear of the future with MS gives rise to an elaborate pattern of resistance/denial as part of the coping strategies. Some of this suggests that both women and men appear to retreat into a biologically essentialist gendered narrative of their experiences. Women through taking on the role of being 'feminine' (e.g. 'pre-menstrual' and physically dependent) and men as masculine (e.g. having sustained 'injury' through physical action rather than having a deteriorating disease).

Paper no. 3:

**"All my womanhood was taken away":
Women's talk about appearance, femininity and sexuality following mastectomy**

Sue Wilkinson

Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

Psychosocial oncologists have traditionally placed great emphasis on women's psychological 'adjustment' following mastectomy for breast cancer. The loss of a breast is typically presented as a major psychological trauma, and women's primary concern after surgery is said to be their altered, 'unfeminine' appearance, and their consequent assumption that they are no longer sexually attractive to men. By contrast, feminist researchers who have actually talked to women about their experiences of breast cancer and breast surgery report that post-mastectomy women are concerned about their survival, rather than their appearance. Drawing on focus group discussions between women with breast cancer, I argue that neither of these bodies of research has captured the complex ways in which such women balance their fears about possible future recurrence of cancer and long-term survival prospects with their concerns about appearance, femininity and sexual attractiveness. While psychosocial oncology has often failed to identify women's concerns about survival following mastectomy, feminist research has often trivialised or dismissed their equally salient concerns about their altered bodies and their sex lives. Those who seek to support women through the life-changing experience of breast cancer need to recognise and address these dual, and interwoven, concerns.

Paper no. 4:

**Justifying the 'designer vagina':
Arguments for female genital cosmetic surgery**

Virginia Braun

University of Auckland, New Zealand

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Rates of cosmetic surgery, on all aspects of the body, continue to increase among women (and are rapidly increasingly among men). In this context, it is unsurprising that women's genitals have become 'the final frontier' for (aesthetic) alteration of the female body in North America. Procedures include labioplasty (reduction of the labia minora), reshaping of the mons pubis and labia majora, vaginal tightening, and hymen reconstruction. In this paper, I examine representations of female genital cosmetic surgery and, focusing on both consumers and providers, analyse the arguments used to 'justify' such procedures. Choice, acceptance, and female sexual pleasure are among the arguments evident in such accounts. These arguments will be discussed in the context of arguments about cosmetic surgery, in general, and in terms of socio-cultural meanings given to women's genitals.