



The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery

Raising Standards, Protecting Patients

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

22 February 2013

Warning against cosmetic surgery tourism

ACCS issues warning over dangers of cosmetic surgery tourism

The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery today issued a warning about the dangers inherent in seeking cosmetic surgery abroad. Several thousand Australians seek cosmetic surgery procedures in Asia each year, sometimes with tragic results and costly results.

In a presentation given at the Medical Tourism Roundtable hosted at the University of Technology, Sydney, ACCS Chief Censor Dr John Flynn said it was counter to good medical practice to link tourism or holidays to cosmetic surgery.

Dr Flynn said that Cosmetic surgery tourism is a discount, cost-driven business, which generally uses commission-driven or otherwise paid agents and often discounted vacation packages to promote cosmetic surgery, which is contrary to the ACCS's Code of Practice, Commonwealth laws and ethical-professional guidelines.

"The decision to have cosmetic surgery should never be taken lightly. Paid agents are not qualified to properly explain the risks, benefits and the appropriateness of the procedure at an initial consultation when these considerations should be explained. This is the time when the patient's hopes and expectations are formed and they should be addressed by the doctor who is going to perform the surgery, not an untrained sales consultant," Dr Flynn warned.

"The ACCS is also concerned that consumers may not fully appreciate whether those apparent discounts and vacation packages are worth the potential for increased risks to their health and safety, Dr Flynn said.

Continues...



Although Dr Flynn agreed that there are some skilled surgeons in Asia, he pointed out that there are many other factors health consumers must consider when considering whether, where and with whom to have a cosmetic procedure; price should be the last consideration.

Dr Flynn said that although Australia's health care system was not perfect, it was among the best and safest in the world. Having a procedure outside of Australia exposes patients to a number of risks.

While the ACCS acknowledges that there are competent practitioners offshore, it is also concerned that consumers may not fully appreciate whether those apparent discounts and vacation packages are worth the potential for increased risks to their health and safety which include:

- Increased risk of complications, infection and impacts on general health particularly with older people where complications are more likely to occur;
- Though there are qualified and skilled doctors practicing in developing countries, it is difficult to assess their qualifications and training;
- It is difficult if not impossible to have a consultation beforehand with surgeon in distant country;
- Follow-up care opportunity is reduced including continuity of care protocols;
- Travel and surgery don't mix – flight risk due to increased post-operative DVT incidence during flight;
- Revision work may be needed, which increases risk and costs to patient and potentially to the public health care system;
- Increased risk of unsatisfactory results – it is very difficult to seek redress, legally or through other forums such as state health board or complaints commissions; and
- Australian Anaesthetists are among the best in the world and reduce the risk of complications arising from anaesthesia.

As part of its Code of Practice, the ACCS has also produced a patient information brochure, "Things you should know". The brochure provides information about choosing a doctor and questions to ask before deciding to have cosmetic surgery.

Continues...



The Code of Practice and patient information brochure are available from the College's website www.accs.org.au

When choosing a cosmetic physician or surgeon, look for the College logo or the Code of Practice Seal which indicates that doctor agrees to be bound by the College's strict Code of Practice.



Your assurance of a high standard

**For further information or interviews, contact:
Alan Jones m. 0420 757 009 or Blanche Wilkie 0425 279 091**

* * *

The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery is a multi-disciplinary body of general surgeons, plastic surgeons, dermatologists, ear nose and throat surgeons, ophthalmologists and other doctors who specialise in cosmetic surgery. The goal of the ACCS is to ensure the safe provision of cosmetic surgery and cosmetic medical procedures to the Australian general community through supply of appropriately trained and certified medical practitioners.

For additional information about the ACCS, please visit: <http://www.accs.org.au>