



The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery

Raising Standards, Protecting Patients

MEDIA RELEASE

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PEAK BODY FOR COSMETIC SURGEONS WELCOMES NSW RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROTECT PATIENT SAFETY

Australia's peak body for cosmetic surgeons has welcomed the recommendations made in the New South Wales Joint Parliamentary Inquiry [Report](#) into Cosmetic Health Service Complaints.

The Inquiry follows several revelations about unsafe activity taking place throughout the State, including the tragic death of Jean Huang after a breast filler procedure performed in Sydney by foreign nationals.

The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS) Vice-President Dr Patrick Tansley said regulators needed a new accreditation standard so the public would not go to practitioners offering cosmetic surgical procedures who are not trained and competent.

"Anyone from fly-in fly-out operators, registered GPs, plastic surgeons and right up to the highest standard of Fellow of the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgeons can call themselves a cosmetic surgeon," Dr Tansley said.

"Patients currently have no way of knowing whether their surgeon is properly qualified and has undergone specific training in cosmetic surgery.

"Australia's most highly trained cosmetic surgeons are usually ACCS Fellows. They are regularly called upon to correct botched procedures performed by untrained and inexperienced practitioners.

"The current system is a complete lottery for patients. There is no simple, national and easily recognisable way for patients to know whether they are in safe hands.

"ACCS Fellows have the strongest credentials in the practice of cosmetic surgery, including two years of mandatory dedicated cosmetic surgery training, following 4-6 years earning a medical degree, and a further five years of surgical experience. No other body has the same degree of rigour and standards for cosmetic surgery."

Whilst the ACCS acknowledges there are some talented plastic surgeons in Australia, the country's peak medical training regulator, the Australian Medical Council (AMC), last year found plastic surgeons trained by the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons had a 'deficit' in their experience of aesthetic surgery and a 'gap' in this area of practice. Read the AMC's report [here](#) (pg. 123).

In comparison, only Fellows of the ACCS have mandatory two years of dedicated cosmetic surgery training.

"A new framework that brings together the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons and other stakeholders will help develop a system of accreditation to provide better and safer outcomes for patients," Dr Tansley said.

A separate area of concern regards telemedicine, utilised for a Doctor to consult patients over Skype or by telephone to ensure access to medicine in rural areas. However, ACCS President Dr Irene Kushelew said telemedicine in cosmetic medicine was being abused leading to harmful outcomes for patients.

"Telemedicine in the context of dermal filler injections may take place in questionable locations, including beauty salons, hairdressing salons, and in private homes, often far from the prescribing Doctor, creating greater risks for patients," Dr Kushelew said.

"In some circumstances the "prescribing Doctor" has little or no knowledge or experience of the procedures being performed in their name.

"All patients need to have a medical consultation with a doctor prior to receiving any cosmetic injectable. At this consultation, your doctor should consider your medical history, allergies, health issues, medication and provide a thorough and realistic analysis of the risks versus the benefits of the procedure.

"The public needs protection from untrained, inexperienced, 'occasional' practitioners offering cosmetic procedures who do not understand the high-risk areas of the face. Many practitioners undergo a one or two day training course only for cosmetic injectables - this is simply not adequate. Blindness can occur when an artery is blocked by the dermal filler when injected in the wrong place and in the wrong way.

"At this time, the ACCS is the only College offering an eighteen-month cosmetic injectable course for medical practitioners. The course includes exams and leads to Fellowship of the College. This specific training means practitioners can perform in a skilled manner and be dedicated to guiding patients responsibly" she said.

Table 1: Types of surgeon performing cosmetic surgery in Australian in 2018

Type of surgeon	Minimum years of training	Detail
1 Cosmetic surgeon (ACCS Fellow)	12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery 4-6 years • 5 years postgraduate surgery experience • Mandatory 2 years ACCS specialized cosmetic surgery training
2 Plastic surgeon (RACS Fellow and Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) Member)	12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery 4-6 years • 5 years postgraduate surgery experience • Optional six months ASPS specialized cosmetic surgery training
3 General practitioner (RACGP Fellow)	7-11 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery 4-6 years • 3-5 years postgraduate study • Zero specialized cosmetic surgery training
4 Registered medical practitioner	5-7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Medicine/Surgery 4-6 years • 1 year internship • Zero specialized cosmetic surgery training
5 Fly in fly out practitioner with no qualifications	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero specialized cosmetic surgery training

The top five most popular cosmetic procedures in Australia include anti-wrinkle injection, fillers, laser and Intense Pulsed Light (IPL), breast augmentation and reduction and liposuction including:

- \$350 million worth of Botox procedures
- 20,000 breast augmentation surgeries and
- 30,000 liposuction procedures.

The ACCS has also published a patient [factsheet](#) with key questions everyone should ask before undergoing cosmetic surgery and key information on [cosmetic injectables](#).

In April 2018, New South Wales Department of Health issued its [Look Beyond The Surface of Cosmetic Procedures](#) report, recommending tighter regulations of cosmetic procedures and urged consumers to be more cautious of budget deals and amateur practitioners.

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About the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery

Established in 1999, the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS) is a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary fellowship based body of Cosmetic Surgeons, cosmetic physicians, plastic surgeons, general surgeons, maxillofacial surgeons, dermatologists, ear nose and throat surgeons, ophthalmologists and other doctors and health care practitioners who practice in cosmetic medicine and surgery.

The primary goal of the ACCS is to ensure the safe provision of cosmetic medicine and cosmetic surgical procedures to the Australian community through the supply of appropriately trained and certified health care practitioners.

The ACCS is the only medical college which provides education and training leading to fellowship specifically in cosmetic medicine and surgery. Fellows of the College are medical doctors who have completed post-graduate education and training and demonstrated competency specifically in cosmetic medicine and surgery. To become an ACCS Fellow, doctors must typically complete a minimum of 12 years of medical and surgical education and training. For additional information about the ACCS, please visit: <http://www.accs.org.au/>