



The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery

Raising Standards, Protecting Patients

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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UK report: there's nothing wrong with cosmetic surgery; beware of specialist qualifications

The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery today welcomed just released UK medical report, 'On the face of it'.

The report, released yesterday by the UK's National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death (NCEPOD), warns patients that cosmetic surgery has not yet been recognised as a medical specialty and they should not rely on the recognised specialist qualifications of practitioners who perform cosmetic procedures.

The report warns: ***"The present reliance on inclusion on the specialist register does not give any assurance that a surgeon has received adequate training in cosmetic surgery."***

The situation in Australia is similar where patients routinely undergo cosmetic procedures by specialist plastic and reconstructive surgeons and other specialists, who are unable to provide evidence of appropriate certified training in those procedures. Some of these 'lets have a go' plastic surgeons practice cosmetic procedures only part time or rarely, sometimes with devastating consequences.

In welcoming the report, ACCS President Dr Russell Knudsen said, "Australians should be able to have confidence that the practitioner they choose for their procedure has been appropriately trained in cosmetic surgery and is certified in the procedure and performs it regularly. There's no place for moonlighting or part-timers."

"Our College has continuously expressed its concern to authorities here that there is a misperception in the Australian community that practitioners who may have other, recognised, specialist qualifications are specifically trained in and therefore a "specialist" in cosmetic surgery."

"That misperception has, unfortunately, been encouraged by a long-running campaign by some plastic and reconstructive surgeons, the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons and the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. Unsubstantiated claims that training in plastic and reconstructive surgery leading to RACS fellowship



and ASPS membership are evidence of full qualification in cosmetic surgery undermine informed consent and threaten patient safety,” Dr Knudsen warned.

Dr Knudsen also welcomed the renewed demand for recognition of cosmetic surgery as a medical specialty by the head of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons Dr Nigel Mercer: “If a new cosmetic medical specialty is recognised in Australia, then medical colleges and societies will be able to have their training schemes assessed against the requirements of the specialty,” Dr Knudsen said.

“Recognition will ensure that the same high standards applied to other areas of medicine are matched in the training for and provision of cosmetic medicine and surgery,” Dr Knudsen said.

In commending the report to Australian policymakers, Dr Knudsen supported most of the report’s recommendations, many of which have already been implemented by the College including:

- rigorously assessed procedure specific training and certification as part of a comprehensive education and training program
- strengthened informed consent guidelines and better information for patients
- advertising restrictions including bans on financial inducements and other pressure tactics

“As NCEPOD’s Chair noted, ‘A consumer of medical services should not have to be an auditor.’ Patients have a right to accurate information necessary to make informed decisions about their health care and without pressure. Currently, in Australia, that can be a huge challenge even for the reasonably well informed,” Dr Knudsen said.

“The report’s authors got it right from the outset by stating simply that ‘there is nothing wrong with cosmetic surgery’. By explicitly acknowledging consumer sovereignty, rather than implicitly scolding those who may wish to have a cosmetic procedure, the expert group began its inquiry from the appropriate starting point: how do we best protect patients? The report is a breath of fresh air in the debate over the regulation of cosmetic surgery and I commend it to all in Australia concerned with raising standards and protecting patients,” Dr Knudsen concluded.

The Report, “On the face of it: A review of the organisational structures surrounding the practice of cosmetic surgery”, is available to download from NCEPOD:

<http://www.ncepod.org.uk/2010cs.htm>

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The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery is a multi-disciplinary body of general surgeons, plastic surgeons, dermatologists, ophthalmologists and other doctors who specialise in cosmetic medicine and surgery. The goal of the ACCS is to ensure the safe provision of cosmetic medical and surgical procedures to the Australian community through supply of appropriately trained and certified medical practitioners. The College has made a full application to the Australian Medical Council to have Cosmetic Medical Practice recognised as a new Medical Specialty. That application may be viewed at: www.cosmeticmedicalpracticesubmission.info

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