

Nurses administering cosmetic treatment and cosmetic procedures

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) and the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery strongly support safe cosmetic treatment and procedures being offered to patients of these services. In Australia, there is increasing demand for a large variety of cosmetic services.¹ Nurses perform a variety of tasks through the provision of skin care advice and referral, including but not limited to: skin cancer checks, management of common skin disorders, acne management, scarring, rosacea, anti-ageing, pigmentation, leg and facial capillaries, skin tightening, and administration of dermal fillers and wrinkle relaxants. Nurses may also be involved in treatments such as: intense pulsed light, laser, chemical peels, light emitting diode therapy, radiofrequency therapy, photodynamic therapy, fat reduction and others. In this expanding sector, nurses must pursue and provide safe and legal practice in the delivery of all cosmetic procedures.

‘National Law’ – applies to ALL nurses working in the area of cosmetic procedures

This national regulatory framework applies to ALL enrolled nurses (ENs), registered nurses (RNs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) working in the area of cosmetic procedures at ALL times.

There are no circumstances or practice settings within which nurses are exempt from complying with the National Law and the professional standards set by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA).²

Nurses working in the area of cosmetic procedures are obliged to have knowledge of and comply with:

- the NMBA’s registration standards, codes, guidelines and policies

- relevant state and territory legislation and regulation and associated local policies, procedures and guidelines. These include (but are not limited to):
 - licensing regulations
 - drugs and poisons legislation (however titled) in relation to obtaining, selling, storing, prescribing, administering and supplying scheduled medicines³

Additionally, nurses working in the area of cosmetic procedures must be aware of the NMBA Position statement on nurses and cosmetic procedures and the Medical Board of Australia’s (MBA) Guidelines for registered medical practitioners who perform cosmetic medical and surgical procedures.

The responsibility of nurses and service requirements

Cosmetic procedures can pose varying levels of risk to patients’ health. They should consult a registered health professional to understand what is involved in a procedure and understand risks and possible complications. Any EN, RN or NP providing cosmetic procedures are reminded of their obligations to comply in full with the requirements and expectations of the profession REGARDLESS of their practice setting.

While nursing is nationally regulated, nursing scope of practice is governed by national as well as state and territory legislation and is heavily influenced by jurisdictional service arrangements and organisational context, policies and models of care.

REFERENCES

1. S. Newberry D. Urban, C. Lawrence, J. Javornisczky, A. Lynam, S. Critchley, B. Cassels, ‘Analysis of Public Submissions Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement in the use of Intense Pulsed Light (IPLs) Sources and Lasers for Cosmetic or Beauty Therapy, Technical Report 177, March 2017’ (2017) <<https://www.arpana.gov.au/sites/g/files/net3086/f/tr177.pdf>>.
2. Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, ‘National Board Guidelines for Registered Health Practitioners Guidelines for Mandatory Notifications’ (2016). <<http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Codes-Guidelines/Guidelines-for-mandatory-notifications.aspx>>.
3. Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia [NMBA], ‘Position Statement - Nurses and Cosmetic Procedures’ (2016), <<http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Codes-Guidelines-Statements/Position-Statements/nurses-and-cosmetic-procedures.asp>>.

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