



The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery

Raising Standards, Protecting Patients

MONDAY 1 APRIL 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

URGENT REGULATION ON COSMETIC SURGERY NEEDED

The national peak body for cosmetic surgery, the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS), has called on federal government to implement urgently new regulation to protect the thousands of Australians seeking cosmetic procedures each year.

The call to strengthen regulations, follows Channel 7's Sunday Night episode on 31 March 2019, highlighting how one underqualified medical practitioner may have put patients' lives in danger. The program exposed how the practitioner undertook high-volume, poor quality, unprofessional practices for women seeking breast augmentation.

The ACCS Vice-President Mr Patrick Tansley said up to five types of medical operators were calling themselves 'cosmetic surgeons' when most did not have the professional authority to do so, leading to huge amounts of confusion for the Australian public.

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

"Almost anyone on the medical practitioner spectrum can call themselves a cosmetic surgeon, from 'fly-in, fly-out' operators, registered GPs and plastic surgeons, right up to the highest standard of Fellow of the Australasian College of 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 or not they are in safe hands."

"ACCS Fellows usually 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 surgical experience. No other body in Australia has the same degree of rigour and standards for cosmetic surgical training."

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 specific cosmetic surgery training.

The ACCS is calling on the Australian Health Minister, Greg Hunt, to bring together the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, state ministerial colleagues and other stakeholders to develop a national accreditation system in cosmetic surgery to provide better and safer outcomes for patients.

The ACCS propose that only doctors who are trained and have reached a recognised competency standard specifically in cosmetic surgery should be allowed to call themselves cosmetic surgeons. This would apply to all doctors undertaking such procedures, including both plastic and cosmetic surgeons.

Governments and regulators must ensure that Australians can properly identify which surgeons are adequately trained to undertake cosmetic surgery skilfully and safely – a fundamental protection that can only be achieved by the creation of a national competency standard for all doctors practicing cosmetic surgery.

Table 1: Types of surgeon performing cosmetic surgery in Australian in 2019

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

Media enquiries

Adam Connolly
0417 170 084
aconnolly@apollo.sydney

Georgina Hall
0420 571 720
ghall@apollo.sydney

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 comprising Cosmetic Surgeons, cosmetic physicians, plastic surgeons, general surgeons, maxillofacial surgeons, ear nose and throat surgeons, ophthalmologists and other doctors and health care practitioners who practice in cosmetic medicine and surgery.

The primary aim of 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 ACCS, please visit: <http://www.accs.org.au/>