



The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery

Raising Standards, Protecting Patients

5 November, 2019

MEDIA STATEMENT

AUSTRALIANS CAUTIONED: BRAZILIAN BUTT-LIFTS CAN KILL INDUSTRY NEEDS ACCREDITATION

The national peak body for cosmetic surgery, the Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS), has urged Australians not to be misled by recent media coverage on the Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL).

Demand for 'Brazilian butt-lifts' is on the rise here in Australia and around the world but the nation's peak professional body for cosmetic surgeons urgently warns Australians not to go ahead with the procedure on the grounds of safety.

A Brazilian butt-lift (BBL) aims to enhance the projection of the buttocks, giving them a larger, more rounded look. To achieve this, fat is removed from another area of the body, typically the outer thighs or abdomen, and injected into the buttocks.

At least 44 patients have died from this procedure worldwide. Evidence shows that one in every 3,000 BBL results in a fatality¹ as a result of a fat embolism, when fat enters the bloodstream and blocks a blood vessel, blocking oxygen from entering the bloodstream.

The Australasian College of Cosmetic Surgery (ACCS) former President Dr Ron Bezic said both surgeons and patients need to think twice about this procedure, or else Australian lives will be lost.

"The risk of death is about one in 3,000 procedures. It is the most dangerous of all aesthetic surgical procedures," Dr Bezic said.

"The College calls on all Australian cosmetic and plastic surgeons to put safety first and refuse to perform this procedure.

"The risk to patients comes from the unintended consequence of fat entering the veins, reaching the heart and cause cardiac arrest. The veins beneath the buttock muscles are fragile and can tear easily. Once damaged, the injected fat can enter the veins, reaching the heart and blocking circulation," he said.

Dr Bezic said there are techniques to reduce the risk, but in no way do they eliminate it, and he advised consumers to look at alternative procedures such as buttock implants which have a much lower risk to them.

"Although risk reduction techniques are adopted by some surgeons, the ACCS believes the risk is not worth it. We advise Australians not to go ahead with a Brazilian butt-lift," he said.

"An international taskforce of surgeons has been established to investigate the risks of Brazilian butt-lifts further, in order to develop protocols to reduce these risks. However, until and if such protocols are proven to be safe, the ACCS will continue to warn patients against having Brazilian butt-lifts and advises surgeons not to perform these procedures."

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5846701/>

The ACCS has published a patient [factsheet](#) with key questions everyone should ask before undergoing any form of cosmetic surgery. For example:

- How experienced is your doctor?
- What are the risks associated with this procedure?
- Are there alternatives to this procedure?

The ACCS 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), recently 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'.

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:

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 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 Surgical 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/>