



Editorial

## Scaling up the APSI Membership

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The purpose of medical associations is to establish professional standards, protect members' interests, and foster the specialty's growth. They organize various activities, disseminate scientific advances, and cultivate tenets of ethical practices. Further, it provides an opportunity to forge enduring friendships between professionals, far beyond academic interactions. While the members enjoy certain privileges, they also owe contributions and corresponding responsibilities to the association.

The Association of Plastic Surgeons of India (APSI), one of the oldest surgical specialty societies, undertakes several activities benefiting its members. In recent years, there has been a steady increase in qualified plastic surgeons, but the APSI does not witness the corresponding growth in membership. Annually, over 300 candidates join M.Ch. Plastic Surgery courses at various universities in India, and another 25 DNB seats are in private institutions.<sup>1</sup> Excluding vacant seats and unsuccessful candidates for the exit exam, over 200 join the pool of plastic surgeons each year. At this rate, the current strength of specialists will double over a decade, a progressive trend indeed given the country's large population.

What is worrisome and alarming, however, is that fewer than 50% of newcomers join the APSI. There appears to be a lack of understanding and awareness of APSI amongst residents and fresh graduates. The matter thus requires urgent attention and a strategic approach. The task before the Association is to have them on the board with a multi-pronged approach.

Data for non-members are currently unavailable. The State Chapter and the regional associations that get the

first information on newcomers should encourage and ensure they join the APSI. With more members in the APSI, the interests of these associations will also be served by greater representation and increased chances of electoral success.

The heads of post graduate training departments have a crucial role in encouraging and ensuring their residents take membership as all of them are eligible to become life members of APSI. The membership grants them several benefits, such as eligibility to participate in award sessions, training fellowships, resident editors to the *Indian Journal of Plastic Surgery*, and several others the association is undertaking. Once residents qualify, the APSI upgrades Associate Life membership to Full Life without additional cost.

The APSI has brought several value additions to the members besides academic activities. A member can apply for travel fellowships, conduct APSI-endorsed educational meetings, and be eligible to participate in awards such as APSI Best paper, PEET Prize, Kilner Essay, and research and publication awards. Furthermore, the certificate of good standing from the APSI is required to apply for international memberships such as ASPS and ICOPLAST. The annual APSICON registration is available at a discounted rate to the members. Free access to the proposed video library is also underway. It is pertinent for APSI to launch outreach activities to attract prospective members and residents.

A segment of plastic surgeons perhaps are aware of the APSI but remain indecisive and reluctant to join the association. While the association can deliberate on

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what can be done differently and better, an individual's aspirations and expectations can only be met by being part of the association. The deeply interwoven relationship between the members and the association makes it stronger and more efficient with the collective efforts of each member. The strength lies in the number for a louder voice for the APSI.

**Conflict of Interest**

None.

**Reference**

- 1 College and Course Search | NMC. Last accessed: 30th August 2022 at: [www.nmc.org.in](http://www.nmc.org.in)