

Letters to Editor

Plastic surgery for undergraduates: The basis of exceptional doctors as demonstrated by India

Sir,

A competent plastic surgeon is expected to draw on basic biomedical and surgical knowledge, experience and technical expertise, ethical and interpersonal skills to provide a high standard of patient satisfaction. "Plastic surgery" (from the Greek *plastikos* meaning "able to be moulded") can be broadly regarded as interventions that reconstruct, repair and cosmetically improve damaged skin and tissue in cranio-maxillofacial structures, breasts and trunk, musculoskeletal abnormalities, skin, hand, extremities or external genitalia systems.

With all these skills and application of both medical and surgical knowledge, plastic surgery is one of the few specialties that could enhance the undergraduate curriculum, but is currently not taught in the United Kingdom. We have recently carried out work comparing the UK medical graduates knowledge of burns, in comparison to those from their Hungarian equals.^[1] We have also assessed the desire for plastics surgery to be present in the undergraduate curriculum.^[1] What we have found, is UK medical students have poor basic knowledge surrounding burns management, yet they have a desire to be taught it.^[1]

Yet the accident and emergency departments remain able to cope with burns on presentation. This is largely (and anecdotally) attributed to Indian doctors, whose training is at the forefront of undergraduate medical education in relation to plastics surgery.^[2] The best asset in our argument for plastics introduction to undergraduate medical education is arguably Indian trained doctors using plastic surgery to integrate both their clinical, medical and surgical knowledge.

Plastic surgery has a place in all doctors repertoire, in encourages and exemplifies integration of thought and good practice. It's a shame so many choose to ignore this.

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