

LETTERS

COSMETIC SURGERY ADVERTISING

Non-surgical invasive procedures such as dermal fillers should also be regulated

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We of the British Association of Dermatologists strongly believe that the advertising of cosmetic surgery should be controlled and limited.^{1 2} Regulation of these services and those who conduct them must also be extended to higher risk non-surgical procedures such as dermal fillers and laser because, like surgery, they can carry clinically significant health risks.

We support a ban on advertising of dermal fillers, which cause chronic, debilitating adverse events such as necrosis, granuloma formation, and even blindness. Dermal filler injections are an invasive medical procedure; the cosmetic indication does not obviate the inherent procedural risks. The risks of cosmetic laser and intense pulsed light treatments include burns and scarring. Although a ban on advertising these ubiquitous treatments may be unfeasible, it should be compulsory to inform consumers of all associated risks and the qualifications of the practitioner.

These treatments must be marketed in a way that differentiates them from the rest of the beauty salon menu of waxing and facials. We endorse the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons' condemnation of incentivised marketing and supermarket-style practices such as "buy one get one free" promotions.

We also call for increased regulation of who can perform non-surgical invasive cosmetic procedures through proper training and assessment associated with the relevant medical and surgical national training bodies. Voluntary self-regulation is inadequate.

These are just "headline" actions that we believe are crucial to safeguard the public. We embrace the opportunity to contribute more fully to Sir Bruce Keogh's review of the safety of products and practice in this area, as well as how they are marketed to consumers.

Competing interests: None declared.

- 1 Taber S. Should all advertising of cosmetic surgery be banned? No. *BMJ* 2012;345:e7508. (7 November.)
- 2 Fatah F. Should all advertising of cosmetic surgery be banned? Yes. *BMJ* 2012;345:e7489. (7 November.)

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