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On the Lancer

Dear Sir,
Read with much appreciation The Guest Editorial "The itinerant surgeon" under the pen name "The Lancer" who is obviously a senior and respected plastic surgeon. I for one would have been most happy to put my signature to this balanced, well written and judicious editorial. It expresses the opinion of a very large majority of plastic surgeons. Proper validation of visiting surgeons is the norm in every civilized country and no one can object to the procedure.

I have been informed of disasters of a type which certainly would not be acceptable in Western countries, where the surgeon is accountable. Here he is not and on most occasions he is not even informed of things going wrong.

At workshops held in conferences the participants who are impressed by spectacular procedures are not aware of the results and they go home to duplicate procedures that they have seen, only to burn their fingers. In this whole exercise the trusting and unsuspecting patient suffers and we on our part fail in our prime responsibility to our patients. This needs to be corrected and is the crux of the question.

"The Lancer" suggests a debate. This in my opinion would be an exercise in futility and a waste of conference time. What we need to do is to select a panel of senior plastic surgeons to formulate a method of validation and then present it to the general body and if approved, the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India in conjunction with the Medical Council of India should formulate a procedure which must be implemented in the case of

every visiting surgeon who operates in this country.

Unless we do this we shall keep on discussing this issue, like the so many other issues that we keep on discussing till the cows come home.

I congratulate "The Lancer" for a superb expose and cannot help feeling that if he had put his name to what he has written, the editorial would certainly have carried more weight.

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