



# Good Drawing Skills in Plastic Surgery: An Indian Perception

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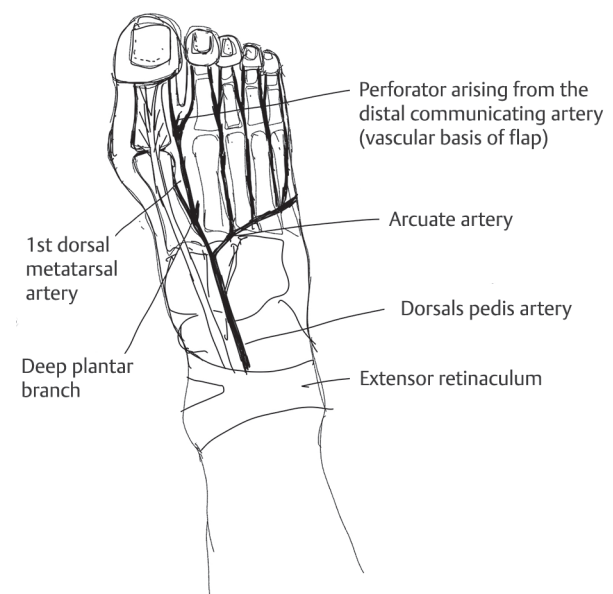
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Plastic surgery and plastic surgeons carry an immense responsibility on their shoulders to sketch out the patient's expectations, yielding improved surgical outcomes through their knowledge of human anatomy and proficient drawing skills. Dr Wolfgang Metka, a Viennese plastic surgeon supported an artistic perspective along with an excellent technique to yield improved results in aesthetic surgery.<sup>1</sup> To gather the opinion of plastic surgeons across the India regarding the role of good drawing skills, we had conducted an observational cross-sectional study through an online survey (using Google Forms). The survey was disseminated to the 45 (64%) plastic surgery residents and 25 (36%) consultants across the country through the social media network (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger) and direct emails to the participants.

Fifty-one out of 70 respondents answered that artistic flair is essential, which correlates with the responses in the previous studies conducted elsewhere in the world.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, 56 respondents had agreed to have drawing or sketching as their hobby. Survey had suggested a greater void in the formal training in drawing or other artistic skills. Interestingly, most of the plastic surgeons in the study (45/70) were in the favor of a course of drawing during their training period so that better drawing skills may be acquired by them. In the past also, it was suggested that an aesthetic surgery training curriculum should comprise art education.<sup>3</sup> There are courses available to improve the artistic skills.<sup>4,5</sup> But in India such courses are still to come. Forty-nine of the 70 respondents believed that both drawing and taking photographs are important in the field of plastic surgery. At times there can be some logistic hurdles associated with the medical photography such as lack of patient's consent, problem of data storage, technical errors, and various paperwork, whereas at the same time, a correct and observational drawing can provide an easy, prompt, less

confusing, and easily accessible option. Respondents were mostly in the favor of drawing during preoperative planning (55/70). Documentation with correct drawing of any complex surgical procedures in intraoperative notes helps in dissemination of relevant information clearly and quickly which also aids in proper follow-up (► **Figs. 1 and 2**). Most of the plastic surgeons in the survey felt that they should not be assessed for their drawing skills (33/70), which indicates that although they had thought that the artistic or drawing skills are important but as these skills are often inherent to oneself,



**Fig. 1** Diagrammatic representation of vascular anatomy of foot by the first author.

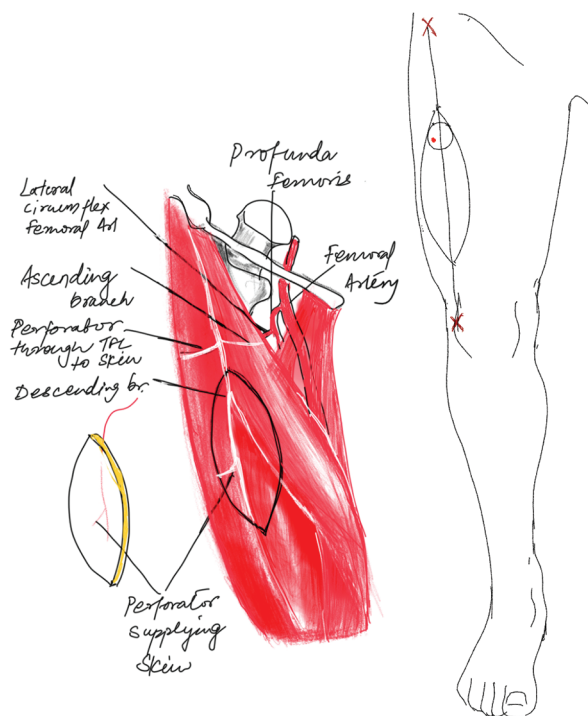
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**Fig. 2** Surgical marking and vascular anatomy of anterolateral thigh flap by the first author.

these should not be assessed. The fact that duly signed documentation of technical details of the procedure on paper with support of photographic evidence may be accepted as an evidence in a malpractice case helpful in medicolegal cases, is also supported by 57/70 respondents. Drawing is an effective, efficient, and convenient method of communicating with both patients and peers, thereby improving patient care by disseminating the visuospatial perception like shape, size, position, and orientation, also favored by 60/70 respondents.

#### Conflict of Interests

None declared.

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