

Editorial

Adversity: A great teacher

A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them

.....John C. Maxwell

A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new

.....Albert Einstein

Mistakes are meant for learning, not for repeating

.....Anonymous

Such erudition on mistakes, and yet we are wary of them!!

When my friend and the Editor of the Indian Journal of Plastic Surgery, Surajit invited me to the guest editorship of the special supplement on “Unfavorable Results” in Plastic Surgery, I hesitated and accepted the responsibility with some trepidation. I was apprehensive that people will not be forthright in discussing the unfavorable results and complications of their chosen field of expertise. Contrary to my initial fears, it was a pleasant surprise to get such an overwhelming response from the invited authors. We all agreed that one should be aware of the likely pitfalls, unfavorable results and complications of the operative procedures that we perform, and be prepared to manage the situation to turn the tide in our favor. “To err is human,” so it is incumbent on us to learn from our mistakes. It is important to analyze, introspect, and find ways of not repeating the same mistake. Mankind has progressed so far because it has learnt from the mistakes of previous generations and found ways to circumvent the undesirable results.

The complications are unintended events that may creep in during the course of management and may or may not have any permanent deleterious effect on the patient. The “surgeon” in us has always wished to have all operative interventions to achieve the best outcome. However that

may not always be possible. The unfavorable results and complications can be avoided by applying sound theoretical knowledge and acquiring the requisite skills. It is as important to be able to foresee the likely complications of a procedure and modify accordingly. Taking it further, one should be alert enough to catch the early signs of impending doom and take suitable corrective measures. The first step of learning from our mistakes is to be honest with ourselves. One should be ready to accept the short comings rather than blaming the extraneous factors. A critical analysis of the problem is the best way to find the right solution. Learning the surgical skills from the masters enables one to execute the procedure with dexterity.

It is primarily with this idea of mutual learning from our errors that this issue has been conceived. This issue would be a journey to the various possibilities and pitfalls that may be encountered during the course of our career. All the contributors have analyzed the causes of unfavorable results in great depth and have suggested ways to avoid them. The supplement covers the broad field of plastic surgery and is a mixed bag of reconstructive and aesthetic plastic surgery procedures. The topics cover acute burns management, management of the postburn sequelae, microsurgery, re-implantations, surgery of the head and neck, reconstruction of nose, surgery of the breast, scar revisions, use of tissue expansion, reconstruction of genitalia, hypospadias, cleft lip and palate, surgical facial rejuvenation, abdominoplasty, liposuction, aesthetic rhinoplasty, mamaplasty, maxillofacial trauma, orthognathic surgery, and craniofacial surgery. There is also a very useful contribution from an anesthetist highlighting the problems peculiar to plastic surgery patients. When faced with an unfavorable situation, this supplement would be a good beacon to manage the difficult situation. I hope the surgeons would find this issue to be very useful in their practice.

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Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	Website: www.ijps.org
	DOI: 10.4103/0970-0358.118589

How to cite this article: Sharma RK. Adversity: A great teachers. Indian J Plast Surg 2013;46:167.