

This response was submitted to the call for evidence issued by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics' Working Party on Cosmetic procedures. Responses were gathered from 11 January to 18 March 2017. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent(s) and not those of the Council.

Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA)

From: Peter Walsh

Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2016 4:10 PM

To: Kate Harvey <kharvey@nuffieldbioethics.org>

Subject: Cosmetic procedures

Dear Kate

I am just responding to your call for evidence about cosmetic procedures.

I am not able to comment on the wider social attitudes to cosmetic procedures, and will restrict my comments to our main concerns – protecting patients' safety and also avenues for redress when things go wrong with cosmetic procedures and cause harm.

We feel more needs to be done to regulate cosmetic procedures. The bottom line is that any procedure that is carried out on someone's body and has the potential to cause harm should come under statutory regulation in order to protect patients and uphold standards. We are disappointed that the opportunity to introduce statutory regulation for Botox and dermal fillers and even procedures such as laser treatment have not been taken. We believe this leaves patients at unnecessary risk. We have advised a number of people whose lives have been ruined by such procedures.

Because cosmetic procedures are provided by private providers there is also a lack of a robust complaints process when things go wrong and no requirement to put people in touch with independent sources of advice and support such as ourselves. People who have suffered harm as a result of cosmetic procedures are particularly vulnerable and reluctant to draw attention to something which they may feel they have brought upon themselves as a result of seeking cosmetic improvements to their appearance. We have called for a complaints procedure akin to that used in the NHS; access to independent advice and support; and also a redress scheme to make it easier for people to get compensation for cosmetic procedures that cause harm.

I would refer you to our response to the Department of Health consultation on cosmetic procedures in 2012: <http://www.avma.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Consultation-98-DOH-Reg-of-Cosmetic-Interventions-Oct-2012.pdf>

Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further help.

Kind regards

Peter

Peter Walsh
Chief Executive


action *against* medical accidents
for patient safety and justice