



My Checklist Manifesto

With the recent introduction of the secure, web-based forum called Wimed.org, we as Aesthetic Society members are truly witnessing a revolution in information sharing. Compared to the unilateral, inherently "belated" print journals, this endeavor represents a very powerful harnessing of all that the web is and should become. Where else can we air our surgical challenges and exchange reparative solutions...this close to as it happens? It is for this reason that I am penning these words as a "call to arms" to our membership to embrace this very real revolution. As plastic surgeons this should come easily: it is in our DNA, after all, to forever strive for "better".

I have forged my own journey in this regard by persistently not accepting the status quo, whether it be my own or our profession's. That is, in order to get better, one has to be willing to question everything; particularly those things that do not go as well as we would like...such as our surgery.

One path that I have taken has been the inception, constant nurturing and now, proselytizing, of a surgical checklist. Its beginnings were both humble and humbling: 3-M sticky notes placed on the patient's chart. They read: "Do not forget to inject Marcaine before closing the wound" (in a submuscular breast augmentation); "Don't forget to conduct abdominal scar revision" (at time of facelift); "Do not forget to call patient's husband during surgery" (to inform that all is well). I say humbling, because the seminal event which ignited my checklist passion was all too avoidable and potentially fatal (and might I add, forever memorable even 15 years later!). After a six hour bilateral breast reconstruction, I wearily pulled the drapes off the patient only to find that the sequential pumps had mistakenly not been placed on the patient's legs! After writing my post op operative orders, a formal checklist became my next writing assignment. And from then on the checklist has continued to grow in clarity and efficiency both in its application and efficacy. That is, a day does not pass that both my operating room staff and myself comment on the checklist's power at preventing the "silent" errors of omission. Please pause for a moment and consider both utilizing and contributing to the Wimed.org initiative as well as your own Checklist Manifesto!

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