



The NCEPOD report *On the face of it*, looked into the provision of service of cosmetic surgery, not at the quality of care of individual patients; however, as a matter of general interest, NCEPOD and our advisors have looked at what the report means for those that may be considering cosmetic surgery.

The Department of Health<sup>1</sup>, the BAAPS<sup>2</sup> and the BAPRAS<sup>3</sup> all have published checklists of questions that those considering cosmetic surgery should ask of their potential provider. On the basis of the NCEPOD report, *On the face of it*, NCEPOD suggests that patients considering cosmetic surgery should also ask the following questions of themselves and of their cosmetic surgery provider:-

### **Group 1: Questions you should ask yourself**

***Cosmetic surgery is a personal choice. The only indication for it is your own personal desire to change your appearance. We think you should ask yourself the following questions.***

1. Am I proposing to have this operation to remedy something that I think really needs improving rather than because someone else has told me I need it?

*Note: As the BAAPS website points out, the real expert on your appearance and any concerns you may have is you. You do not need advice from a nurse or surgeon about what is wrong with your appearance.*

2. Am I in the right frame of mind to be undergoing a cosmetic surgery operation?

*Note: The BAAPS website says you should avoid surgery if you have just undergone a major life event, such as moving house, changing job, bereavement, break up of a relationship or the arrival of children.*

3. Am I confident that those who are proposing to undertake this operation fully understand the emotional needs that have brought me to this decision?

*Note: What the NCEPOD report says about the value of psychological evaluation on pages 22-23.*

4. Have I received enough information about this procedure, including any possible risks, well before making the decision to undergo surgery?

*Note: The process of gaining information about what is available for you and the decision that you should opt to undergo this operation should be separated, so that you have a chance to consider the advantages and disadvantages.*

5. Have I given written consent for the surgical procedure in two stages? the first at the time of the consultation, and the second stage just before the surgery – at least 2 weeks later?

*Note: The risks and other disadvantages of this sort of surgery should be spelled out well before you take your decision, you need to make preparations to be off work and generally become emotionally committed to the decision you have taken. As the BAPRAS website puts it, “cool off before you commit.”*

6. Am I confident that I have been given enough time for reflection or have I been hurried into a decision or offered any financial incentive to have the procedure done soon?

*Note: The BAAPS website advises you to beware of what appear to be “free” consultations and any financial arrangements that may appear to influence your judgement or lock you into a decision.*

## Group 2: Questions you could ask the Clinic

***These questions may seem pointed and direct, but they are all requests for information that we think should be made available to people who are proposing to undergo surgery at the hands of the clinic/hospital. If the Clinic/hospital does not welcome the opportunity to answer them you may be in the wrong place.***

7. Is there a financial penalty if I change my mind about having surgery? If yes, up to which date can I change my mind without a financial penalty?

8. Has the surgeon performed the same operation I am to undergo with the same team in the clinic or hospital where I am to have my operation regularly in the last 12 months?

*Note: What the NCEPOD report says about infrequent surgery on page 29.*

9. How many of those patients have complained to you about the quality of their result or any other aspect of their experience?

10. Does the surgeon hold an NHS consultant appointment? If yes, in which hospital is this? And in which specialty is the surgeon on the GMC specialist register?

*Note: Consider the sort of operation you are proposing to undergo and the relevance of the training that your surgeon has received. The range of surgeons doing this work is described on pages 30-31. The views of BAAPS and BAPRAS are set out on their websites.*

11. Is the surgeon a member of an appropriate specialist association e.g. ASGBI, BAAPS, BAOMS, BAORLHNS, or BAPRAS?

12. Does the anaesthetist hold an NHS consultant appointment? If yes, in which hospital is this? And is the anaesthetist on the GMC specialist register?

13. Is the hospital/ clinic registered with the CQC? If so:  
7.1 Is the Regulated Activity the Performance of Surgical Procedures?  
7.2 When was the last inspection? And  
7.3 What was the outcome?

*Note: the CQC is the official government regulator of these clinics, but it regulates a number of other sorts of healthcare establishments as well.*

14. Will I be provided with guidelines on what to do if I become ill after going home, and is there an emergency 24 hour telephone help-line to call?

15. Which hospital will I go to if I become ill after going home?

16. If there is a problem during or after my operation and I need a greater level/dependency of care than can be provided at this hospital, where will I go?

*Note: What the NCEPOD report states on this subject of post operative support if things do not go well on pages 32-5.*

## References

1. The Department of Health: [http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod\\_consum\\_dh/groups/dh\\_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh\\_4138410.pdf](http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4138410.pdf)
2. BAAPS: <http://www.baaps.org.uk/safety-in-surgery/consumer-safety-guidelines>
3. BAPRAS <http://www.bapras.org.uk/guide.asp?id=135>