

ETHICS OF ADVERTISING IN BARIATRIC SURGERY

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The plethora of advertising in bariatric surgery has produced claims for both surgery/product and surgeon which has raised questions concerning as to whether such claims can be substantiated by science and if not whether it is ethical to do so

A review of ethical requirements with respect to advertising in bariatric surgery. Reviewing both the positions of the non specialists colleges, specialist colleges and medical boards and what punitive action exists for breach of ethical guidelines

Guidelines have been set by all the major institutions, which indicate that advertising should conform to standards which ensure that patient information is enhanced and not distorted. That claims are accurate, that medical professionals are not self promoting or critical of their colleagues and that companies or medical products are not promoted. Punitive action lies with the medical boards with non standardised methods of referral from medical organisations

There is a wide spread belief that ethical standards be promoted within both specialist and non specialist colleges. There is a great similarity of intent to primarily protect the public from disinformation but also to protect the public from bad doctor /surgeon behaviour with respect to advertising. Punitive action primarily resides with the medical boards who may not have surgical representation or ethicists and where interpretation of unethical behaviour ultimately resides. OSSANZ should establish its own ethical guidelines for advertising in Bariatric surgery