

GUEST EDITORIAL

Innovators, Early Adopters, and Pragmatists

Marco A. Pelosi III, MD, FACOG, FACS, FICS, FAACS; Marco A. Pelosi II, MD, FACOG, FACS, FICS, FAACS

Section Editors, Cosmetic Gynecology and Urology

The rise of cosmetic vaginal surgery over the past decade has engendered a wide range commentary from every corner of society. As this *Journal* has recently endowed the subject with its own section, its own section editors, and extended its focus to include cosmetic genital surgery of the male patient, an analysis of professional reactions to the topic is both timely and relevant.

Cosmetic vaginal surgery as a distinct practice was born in the hands of private practice gynecologists some of whom are presenting their work in this issue. The specialty of obstetrics and gynecology, although notable for its pioneers in liposuction and abdominoplasty, lacks formal residency training in cosmetic surgery. However, the number of gynecologists performing these procedures is growing steadily beyond the innovators and the early adopters. There is a distinct need for the presentation and publication of material in this new field not only for gynecologists, but for other cosmetic surgeons who wish to assess, evaluate, and implement these procedures as well.

At present, the majority of gynecologic specialists outside of the cosmetic arena, including academics and professional society leaders, receive the majority of their knowledge regarding cosmetics from the media. In traditional professional circles outside of cosmetics, academic opinion dominates the content of both the literature and conferences and it is very difficult to introduce cosmetic topics and procedures onto any agenda. Paradoxically, critics of cosmetic gynecology will cite the lack of published studies as

evidence that it lacks merit and warrants little attention at professional meetings.

The tide, however, is starting to turn. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has taken note of the large number of gynecologists adopting cosmetic procedures by convening both a cosmetic surgery task force in 2007 and pro/con debates at the most recent annual clinical meeting. As participants in both of these efforts, we have seen the opposition to be a product of fear, uncertainty, and doubt fueled by misinformation and speculation.

Education has been our weapon of choice in resolving most of these conflicts. Once educated on the various postgraduate avenues by which cosmetic surgeons practice and the professionalism with which serious cosmetic surgeons conduct their work, the majority of opponents realign their stance, but continue to demand data.

We began organizing Global Symposia on cosmetic vaginal surgery 3 years ago to fill this void and found intense interest among our colleagues. The synergy of experts convening with experts is very productive for participants and attendees alike, but annual conferences are only a stepping stone. There is a much larger audience beyond those who attend meetings.

This issue of *The Journal* marks the first time that a professional publication has focused on cosmetic vaginal surgery. The data and experience presented herein represents the work of innovators and lays the much needed academic foundation for this new branch of both gynecology and cosmetic surgery.