Aesthetic surgeons can feel pressured by patient demands, even unrealistic ones. First there is the desire to please, but there are also economic incentives. After all, what surgeon isn't eager to add additional surgeries to his or her schedule? When patients start requesting 6 cosmetic procedures instead of 2, busy surgeons suddenly become busier, and that's good for the bottom line. But is it good for patients?

We know that longer surgeries inevitably carry greater risk. Data also suggest that certain combinations of surgeries involving multiple areas of the body increase the risk of serious complications or death. Plastic surgeons are trained to recognize the variables involved in assessing risk to patients and to use appropriate judgment to minimize the risks as much as possible. Is there danger that a new wave of patients responding to the marketing hype of *Extreme Makeover* and copycat promotions will cause otherwise prudent surgeons to lose sight of appropriate standards of care in elective cosmetic surgery?

Responsible plastic surgeons who exercise reasonable judgment may face a difficult challenge in educating prospective patients about the pros and cons of multiple, simultaneous procedures—when they can be safely performed and when they cannot. These surgeons undoubtedly will lose a certain group of patients to more aggressive practitioners who have embraced the concept of “extreme” surgery and believe they can compensate...
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for the additional risks. With careful medical management, the overwhelming majority of their patients will undergo successful operations and be happy with the results. However, when standards of care are stretched too far, it is an invitation for problems to occur.

Aesthetic surgeons must remain level-headed amid the frenzied atmosphere surrounding today's media coverage of cosmetic surgery. There is no excuse for allowing marketing hype to dictate practice standards. We must resist patient pressure for marathon surgeries beyond a reasonable number of hours. We must try to educate our patients about what is realistic for them—and for us as surgeons. When appropriate, we should help patients seek professional care for cosmetic dentistry and refer them for qualified advice on hair, and make-up and other adjunctive procedures that may further improve the patient's appearance. These combined enhancements do a great deal to increase overall satisfaction with results of even minimal surgical interventions.

The popularity of shows like Extreme Makeover comes at a time when scrutiny of patient safety issues in elective surgery is at an all-time high. The American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS) has long supported mandatory accreditation of office-based surgical facilities and has made it a requirement that members operate only in accredited, state-licensed or Medicare-certified facilities. However, you cannot mandate good surgical judgment. It is up to each individual practitioner to set appropriate limits for surgery based on all the factors that we, as trained surgeons, have learned are important to ensuring patient safety. When good surgeons allow marketing hype to dictate practice standards, they are not doing their patients, or themselves, any favors. Although the producers of Extreme Makeover are unlikely to consider a name change for their highly successful program, we can at least counsel our patients, when appropriate, to take their "makeover" one step at a time.

Reprint requests: Dr. Stanley A. Klatsky, 1304 Bellona Ave., Lutherville, Timonium, MD 21093.

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