

KS

Presentation to the Standing Committee on Health and Aging re Inquiry into Health
Fundings

This submission relates to the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry, specifically
“improving the efficient and effective delivery of highest-quality health care”

Key points

- Evidence shows that breast reduction (and to a lesser extent abdominoplasty) improves patients’ general health significantly.
- This surgery may also play a wider role in illness prevention because it enables people to exercise and have a healthier lifestyle.
- This sort of surgery is often seen as “low priority” as compared to excision of cancers etc but in a longer term view, if it helps to prevent heart disease etc. It is a good investment of health spending.
- Currently, although patients are, in principle, entitled to this surgery in the public hospital sector, in practice, most people seeking this surgery in the public sector are not receiving it.
- The selection of people who do receive this surgery in the public sector is not based on clinical need.
- We would like to research whether the use of an anthropometric measurement system (Body Shape Assessment) would enable fairer prioritization of these patients. This would mean that those who are near “normal values” would not be prioritized compared to those who were significantly out of the normal range.
- The outcome of this research could help relevant government bodies with planning of elective surgery in this area.

What our group would like from this committee

- For the committee to develop a mechanism so that results of this research and other research like it can be fed back to relevant Commonwealth / Medicare offices. This will enable improvement of health services to be evidence based.
- Consideration of the concept that some surgery can aid primary health care in the promotion of fitness in the population and that this sort of surgery may be worthy of encouraging, through some mechanism, so that patients are not “competing for beds” with those who are gravely ill.