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The Editor  
ST Forum Page  
Email: [stforum@sph.com.sg](mailto:stforum@sph.com.sg) & Fax: 63198289

Dear Sir

I refer to the spate of articles on aesthetic medicine published in The Straits Times since 19 March 2008.

The SMA welcomes the clarification made by the Minister for Health on 23 March 2008 on the position of the government on this matter, in particular, the emphasis on self-regulation of aesthetic practices by professional bodies. We are also heartened by the circular issued by the Director of Medical Services to all medical practitioners on 24 March 2008 which spelt out the principles of safeguarding medical standards in Singapore as well as the press release "MOH clarifies position on aesthetic medicine" dated the same day.

The vast majority of doctors in Singapore, including those that provide aesthetic practices, are ethical professionals who earn an honest day's living by caring for their patients. Even if some of the mentioned aesthetic practices are not grounded on the most robust body of scientific evidence, the use of the term "snake oil" is insensitive to many in the medical profession. Repeated use of this term by The Straits Times, notwithstanding it was, as we understand it, uttered on a single occasion by a person of authority, is hurtful to doctors and regrettable. It does little to raising the standards of discussion on this difficult issue of regulating aesthetic practices.

Doctors understand that with great powers and trust vested in them by the public, come greater responsibility and accountability. Likewise, we hope that the local media will exercise better discretion going forward so that the readers are better served with more constructive reporting.

Yours sincerely

**DR RAYMOND CHUA**  
Honorary Secretary  
48<sup>th</sup> SMA Council

cc: Mr Han Fook Kwang  
Editor, The Straits Times (Fax: 67320131)