

December 21, 2011

## Toronto doctor involved in liposuction death banned for two years

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Globe and Mail Update

*College of Physicians and Surgeons found Behnaz Yazdanfar incompetent, but she will be allowed to assist in surgeries when her suspension is lifted*

A disgraced Toronto cosmetic surgeon who had a liposuction patient die after surgery will have her certificate suspended for two years - but she'll be allowed to assist in surgeries after that.

Ontario's College of Physicians and Surgeons found Behnaz Yazdanfar incompetent, and that she'd failed to uphold the medical standard of practise in relation to her care of multiple cosmetic surgery patients, including Krista Stryland, who died following liposuction in 2007.

College prosecution lawyers argued that she be stripped of her license altogether, both for public safety and to maintain the public's trust in the profession itself.

Instead, Dr. Yazdanfar will be able to practise, albeit only as a surgical assistant, once the two-year period is up. She can apply to have her restrictions changed but the burden of proof will be on her.

"She could ask that they be varied ... but she would have to establish why they ought to be changed," said College spokeswoman Kathryn Clarke. "The onus would be on her to establish why they ought to be lifted."

Dr. Yazdanfar can't practise except as a surgical assistant in a hospital setting, as long as a College-approved surgeon is present. Her practise will be subject to unannounced inspections, and she is expected to publish her restrictions for patients to read.

She will also have to appear for a formal reprimand in front of a College of Physicians and Surgeons disciplinary committee, and pay the College \$219,000 in costs.

"Dr. Yazdanfar appeared to have learned little," the disciplinary committee wrote in its 377-page decision, published Wednesday. "She removed unsafe volumes [of fat] from patients and continued to do so even after the death of her patient from complications of liposuction surgery."

The report adds that she displayed a lack of knowledge, skill and judgment, that she shirked her responsibility and she engaged "in dangerous practices which jeopardized the health of patients."

Dr. Yazdanfar's lawyer said she had 850 hours of training before she switched from a family practise to a cosmetic surgery clinic. Surgeons require years of training - at minimum a five-year surgical residency.

"Dr. Yazdanfar did not exhibit an understanding of the limits of her training or how this should have influenced the care she provided," the disciplinary committee found, adding that members were "shocked to hear her equating her

experience with a six-year residency program."

The problem, many practitioners argue, is that some would-be cosmetic surgeons equate their limited training with a surgical residency because there are no clear laws preventing them from doing so.

The College has tightened its regulations around cosmetic surgery following the allegations against Dr. Yazdanfar. Now, physicians must notify the college if they want to expand the scope of their practice - from a general practitioner to a cosmetic surgeon, for example. The college will assess non-specialists performing "high-risk procedures."

But many argue non-specialists shouldn't be performing specialized procedures at all.

"I don't think there should be exceptions to this," said Lawrence Tong, a Toronto plastic surgeon who instructs surgical residents studying an aesthetic surgery fellowship.

"Why should there be a way for somebody to sort of go around the system that's already in place and do procedures they're not specifically trained for?"

Some provinces have more stringent rules. In B.C., you can't call yourself a cosmetic surgeon unless you're a certified surgeon. While general practitioners can inject Botox and perform basic laser procedures, anything more invasive requires formal training and certification.

"As a cosmetic surgeon and somebody who's trained for seven years doing surgery, to have somebody basically doing the same thing who's had minimal amount of training, and then have people harmed and even dying..." Dr. Tong said. "I just don't think someone like that should be practising any more."

The Globe and Mail, Inc.