



## Introducing **Complications in Medical Aesthetics Collaborative (CMAC)** to South Africa


The Aesthetics and Anti-Aging Society of South Africa (AAMSSA) is delighted to announce a formal collaboration with Complications in Medical Aesthetics Collaborative. Spearheaded by AAMSSA president **DR ALASTAIR CLARK**, this exciting initiative will have far-reaching benefits to the aesthetics industry in South Africa, offering support to aesthetic practitioners and competent care to patients.

Written by **DR DEBBIE NORVAL**.

**C**omplications in Medical Aesthetics Collaborative (CMAC) is a non-profit organisation that supports clinicians worldwide in diagnosing and managing complications in medical aesthetics. According to CMAC – the first national, standardised, evidence-based complication management system in South Africa – “evidence based medicine” is medicine that is centred around the latest medical research and published scientific literature.

### Be aware of the risk

Aesthetic medicine is, by definition, non-surgical. Procedures are mostly classified as non-invasive or minimally



It is very important that anybody undergoing aesthetic treatments is **aware of the risk of potentially serious complications.** It is the ethical duty of your aesthetic doctor to explain these risks to you, and for you to provide written, informed consent before undergoing a procedure

invasive. Although medical aesthetic treatments carry a lower risk than cosmetic surgery, complications unfortunately still occur. As popularity rises and more and more people choose to have aesthetic procedures, the number of complications is inevitably increasing.

Thankfully, most side effects in aesthetic medicine are temporary, self-limiting or reversible. Depending on the nature of the procedure, these complications range anywhere from swelling, redness, tenderness and numbness, to bruising, sensitivity, irritation and rashes. Occasionally, filler material can also migrate from the injection site to adjacent areas, ultimately leading to less pleasing effects.

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More serious complications include lumps and bumps, nodules, and granulomas. Most of these are treatable with the use of additional injections – however, in rare cases, there are those that may require surgical removal. There is also a risk of infection and abscess formation, bleeding, and hematomas, with heat-based treatments such as laser procedures carrying a risk of burns. And, as is the case with any treatment in medicine, there is a risk of allergy, anaphylactic shock and even death.

Vascular occlusion is one of the most feared complications. If a dermal filler penetrates or compresses a blood vessel, it can cut off the blood supply to the surrounding tissue. Untreated, this leads to cell death and loss of tissues. What's more, should a filler penetrate the blood

vessels feeding the eye, there is a potential risk of blindness. Yet it must be noted that this is an extremely rare complication.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the CMAC Specialist Advisory Board includes a multidisciplinary team of experts including ophthalmologists, plastic, maxillofacial and oculoplastic surgeons, tissue viability and burn specialists, radiologists and ultrasound experts, dermatologists, microbiologists, and infectious disease specialists. Dr Alastair Clark and Dr Debbie Norval represent South Africa on the CMAC International Expert Board.

#### [Help manage complications and minimise risk](#)

CMAC aims to assist South African aesthetic practitioners with managing complications. Every doctor who is registered as a member of AAMSSA automatically has access to the



Your doctor should ask about medications and supplements, since something as harmless as **taking omega oils may increase your risk of bruising**

CMAC platform. This includes access to expert guidance in the relevant field, up-to-date management guidelines, treatment algorithms and an emergency helpline for peer support and advice during a complication. Other benefits include a members' Facebook page for interacting with peers, access to clinical publications and a yearly conference.

A qualified and experienced aesthetic doctor will always strive to minimise risks. A competent doctor will have a working knowledge of pharmacology, biochemistry and physiology of the medicines, products and devices used in aesthetic medicine. They will have a thorough knowledge of anatomy and the danger zones of the face and body. These professionals will also take a detailed medical history, as disorders such as autoimmune disease significantly contribute to complications. Most importantly, your aesthetic doctor must be able to manage unrealistic patient expectations, while identifying 'red flags' including that of social and psychological risks such as body dysmorphic disorder.

### Support and collaboration

When facing a serious complication, most doctors appreciate the wisdom of communicating with colleagues and experts in the field. This is not the time to be proud or defensive but, rather, a time to reach out for support – even if it is simply to confirm that the management is up to date and correct. This is where CMAC comes to the rescue, by having a team of experts in complication management to support one another. Just simply knowing that your doctor is guided by the latest scientific evidence can be very reassuring indeed.

Fortunately, almost all complications (no matter how serious) are treatable and fully reversible if diagnosed early and managed correctly. It is therefore crucial for standards to remain high in the aesthetics industry in order to ensure that only medical doctors are allowed to practice aesthetic medicine in South Africa.

### Raising standards

Doctors who are members of AAMSSA and CMAC are part of an innovative professional collaborative

– a group of highly qualified experts with a particular focus on raising the standard of clinical practice in the prevention and management of complications. As a society, AAMSSA fosters a spirit of professional collaboration – one that continuously strives to develop and improve clinical practice and treatment outcomes. In brief, we are all here for the safety of our patients. **A2**



**Dr Alastair Clark**  
MBCh, GPSC (Aesthetics),  
President of AAMSSA



**Dr Debbie Norval**  
MBBCh (Rand), Dip Pall Med  
(UK), M Phil Pall Med (UCT),  
Adv Dip Aesthetic Med (FPD)



Is your aesthetic doctor a member of AAMSSA?  
To find out, visit the AAMSSA website –  
[www.aestheticdoctors.co.za](http://www.aestheticdoctors.co.za) – where a list of our  
members is available.  
For additional information, search the CMAC website:  
[www.cmac.world](http://www.cmac.world)