



UROLOGICAL SOCIETY
OF AUSTRALIA
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MEDIA RELEASE

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The new screening tool asking about your job and sex life that protects your health.

Urologists and patients have partnered to develop a new postoperative screening tool that gets personal in an attempt to improve treatment outcomes for women who have had pelvic mesh implants.

Surgical mesh used in these operations have become the centre of global lawsuits due to the extreme side effects suffered by some patients.

“One of the most important things we saw when people had complications with mesh was the barrier to accessing treatment, because we weren’t asking the right questions,” said [Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand](#) (USANZ) Female Urology Specialty Advisory Group (SAG) Leader, Dr Eva Fong.

“The newly developed screening tool asks questions about a patient’s sex life and relationship, and whether there has been any impact on their work or social life. It has been designed this way to help identify adversities that might be an early warning sign of medical issues or complications,” said Dr Fong.

The screening tool will give patients a better say in their treatment and was presented at the [5th USANZ Biennial Functional Urology Symposium and 20th Pan-Pacific Continence Society \(PPCS\) Annual Meeting](#).

“Previously, our post-op questionnaires have been generic and while useful, they did not help us in a way that gave the patient the ability to speak up about issues beyond pain and discomfort,” said Dr Fong.

“If a woman has an adverse outcome that leads to a relationship breakdown, or job loss, then she can express that through the questionnaire and by capturing that information, we can allow the patient to better advocate for her own health.

“I hope they will feel seen and heard in a way they haven’t been in the past,” she added

This year’s Symposium and Annual Meeting will be discussing this issue, and others relating to incontinence, which impacts as many as a third of people over the age of 15 in Australia, with the majority of them under the age of 65.

Women are twice as likely to suffer through incontinence. The problem impacts dignity, quality of life, and the mental health of those living with it, affecting their ability to work and have an active social life.

Stress Urinary Incontinence (SUI), which is urine leakage during activities like coughing, sneezing, lifting, laughing or exercise, can be especially debilitating and embarrassing. Surgical options can help with SUI, and increasingly non-mesh options - like colposuspension, fascial slings and the injection of gel-based bulking agents - are being used which avoids mesh complications.

Other key topics that were discussed at the Symposium and Annual Meeting held in Sydney in mid-June, include the latest consensus on male continence surgery from the International Consultation on Incontinence guidelines as well as updates on minimally invasive surgeries for enlarged prostates.

“We’re touching on things like the use of male slings and artificial urinary sphincter surgery which is really modern and is considered to be not too invasive,” said USANZ Male Lower Urinary Tract SAG member Prof Eric Chung.

“USANZ members have been at the forefront of the adoption of many new technologies and are also at the forefront of patient education and awareness,” he added.

“Quality of life is something we can help with, and through conferences like this one, local experts have the chance to learn about global advances in health care that might help patients to get back to living their best life,” Prof Chung said.

About Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand

The Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand is the peak professional body for urological surgeons in Australia and New Zealand. Urologists are surgeons who treat men, women and children with problems involving the kidney, bladder, prostate and male reproductive organs. These conditions include cancer, stones, infection, incontinence, urination difficulties, sexual dysfunction and pelvic floor problems. <https://www.usanz.org.au/>