



Position Statement – Foot & Ankle Surgery

The Australian Orthopaedic Association (AOA) is the professional body for orthopaedic surgeons in Australia. The Australian Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society (AOFAS) is a sub-specialty society of AOA. AOA provides high quality specialist education, training and continuing professional development. AOA is committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of orthopaedic care, and is the leading authority in the provision of orthopaedic information to the community.

AOA Position

Education and Training

AOA believes that there should be a uniformity across education and standards of training for all Australian health professionals practicing within surgical disciplines and a single organisation should be responsible for accrediting that education and training.

AOA believes that the Australian Medical Council (AMC) should be that accrediting body.

It does not serve the interests of the public (or of patient safety) to have arrangements whereby a discrete area of a more general specialty such as surgery is covered by a different accreditation standard for education and training.

Disclosure to Patients

AOA believes where a health professional uses the title 'doctor' or 'surgeon' or 'specialist surgeon' and is not medically trained they must disclose to the patient/client that they are NOT medically trained or a medical officer and that they do not possess a medical degree.

AOA notes that there are legal implications for purporting to hold oneself out to be a medically trained medical practitioner.

Results of a Galaxy poll demonstrate Australians overwhelmingly support legislation to restrict the title 'surgeon' to only medically qualified doctors: 93% of the voting-aged population agrees that there should be legislation that ensures that only qualified medical doctors can use the title 'surgeon'. Just 3% say 'no' and 4% 'don't know'.

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