

### Assistance at Difficult Operations

In many surgical disciplines, from time to time, difficult cases are encountered when the help of an experienced colleague would be of benefit to both the patient and the surgeon.

1. When it is recognised that a planned elective procedure is likely to present considerable difficulties, a surgeon should consider enlisting the aid of an experienced colleague.
2. When considerable unexpected difficulties occur during the course of an operation (elective or emergency), a surgeon should similarly consider enlisting the aid of an experienced colleague.
3. When a surgeon is approached by a colleague with a request that assistance be provided with a difficult case, he/she should endeavour to provide that assistance.
4. When a surgeon is approached for assistance when an operation is already underway, and difficulties have been encountered, he should make every effort to provide that assistance, even though it may cause serious disruption to his/her own schedule.
5. If it is impossible for a surgeon to provide the requested assistance, he/she should offer to contact another colleague (especially in the emergency case).
6. A surgeon who is asked to provide assistance for a colleague should consider it a compliment and not a chore.

VSCC Approved: April 2005