

## Association launches to raise plume awareness

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**The potential danger of surgical smoke or diathermy plumes generated by electrosurgical, laser or ultrasonic devices has been highlighted with the launch of a new association.**

The UK Council for Surgical Plumes aims to raise awareness to both patients and practitioners of the importance of measures to protect human health. Vapours, smoke, and particulate debris produced during laser and IPL procedures to vaporise, coagulate, and cut tissue are called plumes.

One 2016 study by Özcan İlçe et al. of 81 nurses and doctors performing electrosurgery indicated that exposure to surgical smoke caused headache, eye watering, coughing, sore throat, bad odours absorbed in the hair, nausea, drowsiness, dizziness, sneezing and rhinitis.

According to association founders, physicist and bioengineer Mike Murphy and Dr Zambia Kader, the evidence linking surgical smoke and harm to the human body should not be ignored by practitioners.

Murphy said that an association exists in the US called the International Council on Surgical which promotes the safe use of lasers and felt that there should be a UK-based equivalent. He said, "We started this association to inform laser/IPL users about plumes – many users have no idea that they are potentially hazardous. It's important for non-surgical aesthetic practitioners to understand that plumes can still exist outside of surgery when you are using high energy machines, and the real problem is that people don't know about this." Murphy added, "This is an important issue now, especially given that new research from the US has found that some laser-generated plumes can contain quite nasty contaminants."

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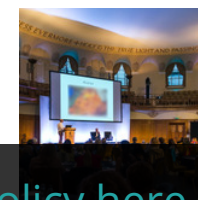
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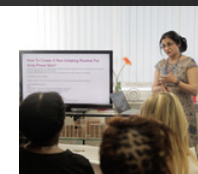
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Murphy stated that there are several methods practitioners can take to improve their protection against plumes. “Practitioners should have fan extractors with proper filters, proper ventilations in your treatment rooms for constant fresh air and ideally you and your patients should wear masks N95 masks to properly filter nanoparticles,” he said.

According to Murphy, the UK Council for Surgical Plumes will have a membership option and will also present lectures and training to help raise the awareness amongst those in the industry.

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