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## **Surgery and the Ageing**

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May, 2017**

The decision to operate or not operate on an elderly frail patient can often be difficult - will the patient survive the surgery and what sort of quality of life can be anticipated?

This was one of the questions posed to surgeons attending their Annual Scientific Congress (ASC) in Adelaide this week.

These kinds of questions must always be asked pre-surgery, but difficult conversations in urgent situations with families with different beliefs and perspectives can be challenging, according to Melbourne General and Breast Surgeon Meron Pitcher, from Western Health.

Ms Pitcher said that diseases that previously significantly shortened life were now managed as chronic conditions with much improved quality of life.

“As surgeons we are seeing more elderly patients presenting for surgery, and we confront challenges in determining the benefits and risks in terms of complications and frailty,” Ms Pitcher said.

The Melbourne surgeon suggested that advanced care planning may be helpful to agree on realistic goals and expectations as well as prepare for outcomes of treatment.

Ms Meron Pitcher’s presentation to the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) ASC explored the many considerations of surgery across the geriatric population.

Up to 1500 surgeons have been meeting at the Adelaide Convention Centre for a week of workshops, discussions, Plenaries and masterclasses across a broad range of surgical issues.

For more information about the Annual Scientific Congress please visit:

[www.asc.surgeons.org](http://www.asc.surgeons.org)

### **About the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS)**

RACS is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Australia and New Zealand. The College is a not-for-profit organisation that represents more than 7000 surgeons and 1300 surgical trainees and International Medical Graduates. RACS also supports healthcare and surgical education in the Asia-Pacific region and is a substantial funder of surgical research. There are nine surgical specialties in Australasia being: Cardiothoracic surgery, General surgery, Neurosurgery, Orthopaedic surgery, Otolaryngology Head-and-Neck surgery, Paediatric surgery, Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Urology and Vascular surgery.

[www.surgeons.org](http://www.surgeons.org)

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