

**Commentary on:** Platt MS, et al. Death associated with liposuction: case reports and review of the literature. *J Forensic Sci* 2002;47(1):205–207.

Sir:

I am confused by the article “Deaths associated with liposuction: Case reports and review of the literature” by Platt et al. *J Forensic Science* 2002;47(1)205–207.

The abstract describes the use of dilute local anesthesia with lidocaine and epinephrine to perform liposuction. The authors then describe three deaths in which the type of anesthesia is very unclear. In case one, the anesthesia used was not mentioned, although the procedure involved, liposuction with abdominoplasty, cannot be done with dilute local anesthesia. Was this case done under general anesthesia? Cases two and three were performed with no lidocaine in the tumescent fluid, and hence must have been done under some other sort of anesthesia. What type was used?

If these deaths occurred following liposuction under general anesthesia or unconscious sedation, the abstract of this article is grossly inaccurate and misleading. It should be retracted. In addition, the discussion has no relationship to the case reports.

It should be noted that at least three, and probably four, of the Rao liposuction deaths mentioned in the discussion were performed under general anesthesia and the fifth with intravenous narcotics and benzodiazepines (1).

This is a very important point since liposuction under general anesthesia has been associated with a large number of deaths and injuries, while no deaths, and very few injuries, have been associated with liposuction under dilute local anesthesia (2–4).

#### References

1. Rao RB, Ely SF, Hoffman RS. Deaths related to liposuction. *N Engl J Med* 1999;340:1471–5.
2. Coldiron BM. Patient injuries from surgical procedures performed in medical offices. *JAMA* 2001;285:2582.
3. Coleman WP, Hanke CW, Glogau RG. Does the specialty of the physician affect fatality rates in liposuction? A comparison of specialty specific data. *Dermatol Surg* 2000;26:611–5.
4. Coldiron BM. Office surgical incidents: 19 months of Florida data. *Dermatol Surg* 2002;28:710–3.

Brett Coldiron, M.D., F.A., C.P.  
3024 Burnet Ave  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45219  
E-mail: [brettcoldiron@hotmail.com](mailto:brettcoldiron@hotmail.com)