Misleading advertising by Lasik surgeons

Dr. Gulani is a world resource for Lasik surgeons and patients who need to have their complications corrected. Nevertheless he says, Prevention is the way to go!

Among a handful of eye surgeons in the world who can correct previous Lasik patients back to 20/20 vision, Dr. Gulani has summarized basically FOUR reasons for poor outcomes in Lasik surgery:

Doctors who may be new and inexperienced themselves but use the established name recognition of their more experienced, senior partners (who may have actually even retired from the practice).

Eye surgery “Mills” that advertise the joint number of cases done by all chain centers across the nation (ie. 500,000 cases done) while their surgeon may be a novice with a high chance of causing bad outcomes.

Doctors using celebrity testimonials (NFL sportsmen/movie stars etc). In many such cases, the doctors actually pay a hefty sum to be known as official surgeons of such celebrities. Also, they most often will do surgery for free to get an endorsement.

Lack of patient education and expectations:

Patients are not educated about other available options since the surgeon may themselves not be capable of performing those options.

Patients feel intimidated to ask questions about surgeon qualifications, vision expectations, side effects etc.

Cookie-Cutter surgery by Lasik surgeon “One size fits all”

Lasik may be all that the surgeon performs. They be ignorant or incapable of performing the entire range of Laser Vision Surgeries.

Lack of knowledge, initiative or expertise in offering and performing vision surgery options if Lasik is not ideal for the patient (ie. New generation ICL surgery for Thin cornea patients who are not ideal Lasik candidates).

Poor pre-operative Technological analysis of the patient’s eye anatomy, vision and stability.

Lack of understanding on surgeon’s part regarding interaction between, anatomy, physiology and optics of the eye to get a great vision outcome.

Lack of technological finesse to detect early abnormalities and avoid Lasik in improper candidates

Inability to deliver the best outcomes due to lack of modern, cutting edge equipment.

Gulani Rules For Safety In Choosing A Lasik Surgeon
Besides visiting the surgeon’s website; do use a search engine (ie. Google/MSN/ Yahoo etc) and type in the doctor’s name and see what comes up. “Do you find only a website and other paid advertising claims? Or do you find interviews, published articles and third party confirmations of the doctor’s status?”

If your surgeon says that they are the First or that they teach other Lasik surgeons, ask for evidence. Are they first in the world, country, state or just on their street (decreasing order of importance). Do they teach at local dinner meetings that they host or are they invited to teach nationally at prestigious podiums.

Meet with the surgeon, get a feel for the integrity and involvement of the surgeon in educating you and answering every question. Also make sure that your surgeon is contactable and that they do indeed respond when you call.

Make sure that your surgeon will see you before surgery, perform your surgery and also see you and be available after your surgery.

Find out if your surgeon performs the full spectrum of Laser Vision Surgery (remember Lasik is just one of many Laser Vision techniques) so they can offer what is truly best for you rather than suggesting the only surgery they know how to perform.

Do not fall for flashy computer screens and equipment in the office; make sure that you understand all that is going on and insist on asking the surgeon to explain in layman terms.

When meeting your surgeon, do ask about possible side-effects and complications. Ask if in the rare event that you do end up having a complication can they handle it? If the answer is yes, then ask for evidence.

Thus due diligence on part of the patient, experienced selection of individualized surgery by the surgeon and effective use of modern technology can all together raise the bar on safety and predictability in LASIK -- one of the most successful surgical breakthroughs of modern times.