



## THE SOUTH AFRICAN SPINE SOCIETY

[www.saspine.org](http://www.saspine.org) (Section 21: 2003/010352/08)

[president@saspine.org](mailto:president@saspine.org) | [treasurer@saspine.org](mailto:treasurer@saspine.org) | [membership@saspine.org](mailto:membership@saspine.org) | [secretary@saspine.org](mailto:secretary@saspine.org) | [academic@saspine.org](mailto:academic@saspine.org) | [contact@saspine.org](mailto:contact@saspine.org)  
[presidentelect@saspine.org](mailto:presidentelect@saspine.org) | [pastpresident@saspine.org](mailto:pastpresident@saspine.org) | [congress@saspine.org](mailto:congress@saspine.org)

27 March 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As surgeons, but also healthcare practitioners we are in the firing line with a serious enemy.

We are facing a lot of pressure to take care of our patients, but we also have a responsibility to our families.

We will have to respond to this pandemic and this response might require us to dispense treatment and care outside of our comfort zones.

We have received numerous requests regarding guidance to proceed with elective surgeries in the next few weeks. Unfortunately there are no regulations that define our treatment parameters.

Recommendations regarding elective surgery:

1. Elective surgery is defined as surgery that is planned in advance and where postponement of the surgery will not result in the patient's quality of life being affected with a 3 month period;
2. Emergency surgery is required when there is a significant risk of death or permanent disability if it is not performed;
3. Currently all public hospitals have cancelled all elective surgery
4. The situation in private practice is not well defined
5. We have an ethical obligation not to increase the risk of COVID-19
6. Surgical procedures that require admission for more than one day of frequent follow up visits should be delayed.
7. Please protect yourself and your staff.
8. All patients with significant co-morbidity should be delayed.

It is up to you as a responsible and ethical surgeon to assess the risk for each case and take appropriate measures.

We are all going to experience a decline in our financial positions. We are in discussions with indemnity insurers like MPS, Ethiqal and AON to lessen our financial burden and will keep you updated.

There will be many challenges over the next few weeks and even months. We as EXCO wish you a blessed time and that you continue to take care of your patients and families throughout these troubled times.

Regards

Dr Etienne Coetzee  
SASS President



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

Copyright 2007 SASS

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)