



## Communication Code

### **Introduction**

The International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders is a professional society of physicians and other healthcare professionals who are involved in the management of obesity and its related illnesses. IFSO aims to promote the development and the application of the latest up to date evidence-based methods in the treatment of obesity including surgical, medical and endoscopic therapies.

Membership of the Society includes medical professionals and allied health professionals including dietitians and psychologists. Membership of the society spans members in different continents in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, North and South America and Asia-Pacific region.

### **The need for this code**

IFSO members practice in different countries around the world and within different time zones. Face to face meetings and discussions are not always possible or practical. The society and its members often use social media (Facebook®, Twitter®), texting apps (WhatsApp®) and the society website to communicate with one another.

This Code of Communication was put in place by the Communication Committee in order to define what the society considers as acceptable for sharing on its different platforms.

### **What does this code apply to?**

All items posted by members on the society platforms are included under this code. This includes and not limited to messages, blogs, file attachments, audio attachments, photos and videos.

### **Who does this code apply to?**

This code applies to all members of IFSO without exception using any of the society communication platforms.

### **Who is responsible for implementing this code?**

All members of the society are requested to follow the terms set out in this code when using any of IFSO platforms. Members are also encouraged to remind their colleagues to do so.

The ultimate responsibility for implementing the terms of this code falls on the “Admin(s)” of the different society platforms in collaboration with the communication committee members.

### **Who produced this code?**

This code is produced by the Communication Committee of IFSO.

### **How long is this code valid for?**

This code is valid for the duration of the term of the Communication Committee. The terms of this code are subject to review and renewal each time a new committee takes office or when the need arises.



## **Terms of the Communication Code:**

### **A) Language:**

English is the official acceptable language for communication across the various society platforms.

### **B) Quality of language:**

Only appropriate and adequate language is allowed to be shared across the society platforms. Inappropriate, inadequate or abusive language will not be tolerated on any of the society platforms and such contents will be deleted by the "Admin(s)". If a recurring incident is noted, the individual producing such language will be warned and may be banned from the social platforms of the society.

### **C) Patients' Identifiable Information (PII):**

Members of the society are always encouraged to discuss new and interesting clinical cases. Such discussions create a healthy debate amongst the group and provide a great teaching opportunity to us all. Members are reminded to be vigilant and respectful of their patients' confidentiality when presenting their cases to other members of the society. Any information that can potentially lead to the identification of a patient (patient name, patient home address, and patient hospital number) should be deleted prior to presenting the cases to other society members. Any posts found in breach of the above and showing Patients' Identifiable Information risk being deleted by the "Admin(s)". If a recurring incident is noted, the individual producing such posts will be warned and may be banned from the social platforms of the society.

### **D) Photos and Videos:**

Members are reminded to be thoughtful when posting photos or videos of their surgical work or clinical cases and to respect their patients' privacy.

Members are encouraged not to show photos or videos in which patients' can be identified by other members of the society unless patient consent has been obtained.

Members are encouraged to refrain from posting explicit photos or videos on the society platforms.

Such contents can only be allowed if there is a clear and unequivocal benefit to the clinical discussion and teaching for other society members. Any posts found in breach of the above will be deleted by the "Admin(s)". If a recurring incident is noted, the individual producing such posts will be warned and may be banned from the social platforms of the society.

Members are encouraged to submit good quality media: photos or videos with good quality sound in videos if included. Low quality media may be a barrier for any interaction or feedback and may force Admins to reject such posts. Feedback from Admins to members attempting to post will be given prior to rejection.

### **E) Religious and Political views:**

IFSO is a professional society that focuses purely on the surgical, medical and endoscopic management of obesity and its related illnesses. The society's platforms should not be used to express any of its members' religious and/or political beliefs.

Any posts found in breach of the above will be deleted by the "Admin(s)". If a recurring incident is noted, the individual producing such posts will be warned and may be banned from the social platforms of the society.



#### **F) Private work/services:**

IFSO platforms are meant for members to connect with each other and share their knowledge and experience. None of the society platforms should be used to advertise for private work or services offered by any member of the society or a third party.

#### **G) Commercial contents:**

IFSO acknowledges the significant contributions its industry partners play in sponsoring the various events, meetings, workshops and training days. However, members should not use any of the society's platforms to advertise for a certain company, product or drug.

Only the society or any of its various committees are allowed to advertise on the society platforms. Such advertisement is only allowed once the appropriate process has been followed to do so.

Published work in respected, peer reviewed journals referring to a certain product and/or drug can be shared across the society platforms.

#### **H) Equality and Diversity:**

IFSO prides itself as being a professional body to various clinicians and allied healthcare professional from various countries and backgrounds. Membership to the society is open to any individual interested in the treatment of obesity and its related illnesses regardless of their sex, colour, race, religion, professional background, ethnicity or country of origin.

Any content shared on any of IFSO platforms that discriminates against an individual in any way, shape or form will be deleted immediately by the "Admin(s)".

#### **I) Legal responsibility:**

IFSO is not legally responsible for any content (comments, images, or videos) posted by the members, nor does it represent its views. Medical advice posted by members on social platform does not represent advice by IFSO, and it is up to the surgeon/physician sole judgement to utilize this advice. Under no circumstance IFSO would be legally bound to any improper content posted on any social media platform, and it is up to IFSO to act within its legal power against anyone who would pose any legal threat to the society.