



IS THIS FUN?

"People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing."¹

—Dale Carnegie

"Life is too short to not have fun; we are only here for a short time compared to the sun and the moon and all that."²

—Coolio

1. Carnegie D. *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Simon & Schuster; 1936.

2. Top 10 life is too short quotes. Brainyquote. Accessed October 26, 2021. <https://www.brainyquote.com/lists/topics/top-10-life-is-too-short-quotes>

once had an illuminating conversation with a respected colleague who limits his practice to laser vision correction. He was considering adding a particular service that his administrator assured him would place his practice on a better financial foundation. The additional revenue generated from this service would allow upgrades to his office and equipment and improve staffing levels. He told me that his practice was doing just fine financially and that his chief criterion for offering this service was whether it would be fun.

At that point in my career, I was focused on building all aspects of my practice, fun or not. Like most anterior segment surgeons, I dealt with a host of conditions and procedures, some of which I would categorize as not at all fun. Limiting care to the fun stuff was not really an option for me. Further, I would argue that even the aspects of our practices that we enjoy the most typically have some tedium associated with them. Hearing a surgeon say that he had the luxury of limiting his practice to services he found fun made me a bit envious.

The cover focus of this issue discusses elective medicine. We've gone to great lengths over the years in *CRST* to point out all the benefits of offering elective services to both our patients and our practices. We tend to think of elective medicine from the patient's perspective; the procedure or treatment is neither mandatory nor necessary. At the risk of pointing out the obvious, it's important to remember that these procedures are also generally elective for the physician. You can choose to offer them or not. Financial

considerations will undoubtedly play a role in the decision to provide a service. Consideration also should be given, however, to whether you and your staff will enjoy offering the service and how disruptive it would be to your core practice focus.

Adding a procedure or two from the category of elective care may be as simple as learning a new technique or as complex as hiring an associate and making a significant capital investment in a facility and equipment and staff. It is important to consider that you may bring procedures into your practice with which you are relatively unfamiliar and may not be qualified to perform yourself. Monitoring the quality of care delivered in this context can be challenging.

It is also important to consider whether expanding your services sends a confusing message to your patients. Imagine seeing marketing from a neurosurgery practice about their microsurgical techniques for hair transplantation. "Come to us for all your microsurgical head-related needs!"

Many elective services are clearly complementary to services we already perform, and many practices have successfully integrated them. Before you embark on offering a new category of service, however, it makes sense to perform a gut check and ask yourself why you are considering doing this in the first place. Is the service you are looking to integrate well suited to the personal qualities of your practice? Will it become a giant headache? Do you have the bandwidth to offer the service with the same level of quality you are accustomed to delivering?

If you decide to dive into the world of elective medicine, my advice is to be selective and careful, keep your eye on the ball of your core practice emphasis, and, most importantly, have fun. ■

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