

Empowering tomorrow's surgeons: PRASSA UK's commitment to advancing plastic surgery awareness within the student population

BY SYDNEY BARNES AND MAX ABOUTORABI



In the dynamic world of medicine, one organisation stands out as a beacon for aspiring plastic surgeons – the Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery Student's Association of the United Kingdom (PRASSA UK). Born out of a passion for excellence and a commitment to advancing plastic surgery education, PRASSA UK has become the UK's first student-led plastic surgery association, nurturing innovation, collaboration, and professional growth among the medical student population. PRASSA UK is affiliated with the Plastic Surgery Trainees Association (PLASTA UK) and the British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons (BAPRAS).

The realisation that such a society was needed stemmed from, not only a noticeable paucity of teaching and coverage of plastic surgery within the curriculum, but also a scarcity of opportunities and resources for medical students to explore their interest in plastic surgery outside of the academic setting. Comprising students from medical schools across the country, the association is driven by the belief that the future of plastic surgery lies in the hands of the next generation of surgeons.

Achievements

PRASSA was born out of a recognition that university plastic surgery societies, before PRASSA's establishment, functioned independently at a regional level, often in isolation. However, since its inception, PRASSA UK now stands as a central force, unifying 40 university plastic surgery societies in collaborative efforts. PRASSA has coordinated several online seminar series addressing plastic surgery teaching, women in plastic surgery, and widening participation in plastics. These initiatives have successfully united students, professionals, and field experts. In conjunction with these webinars, PRASSA has established a national essay prize cultivating student engagement in the subspecialty.

New initiatives

PRASSA is proud to announce that it is providing its members with many exciting opportunities this year to grow its student community with the primary aim of encouraging awareness and knowledge

about plastic surgery. One such new initiative is its collaboration with the UK Plastics Research Collaborative (UKPRC) on the INSPIRE Mentorship Programme, which connects students with experienced plastic surgeons. This programme provides invaluable insights, guidance, and mentorship, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-world practice. This year, PRASSA plans to run its first national conference, providing medical students with the opportunity to attend talks and interactive workshops by esteemed speakers who are pioneers in their field. Additionally, in a bid to improve accessibility to plastic surgery-themed events, PRASSA is organising several regional conferences and workshops organised by its national network of university representatives across the UK, now totalling 50. Furthermore, PRASSA is exploring collaboration with plastic surgery charities in organising charity webinars, highlighting a commitment to humanitarian global surgery, and expanding the reach of educational initiatives in reconstructive surgery. The association has also planned research initiatives, encouraging students to delve into novel projects that contribute to the advancement of plastic surgery. By promoting a culture of research and innovation, PRASSA aims to mould students into versatile professionals, arming them with a blend of theoretical knowledge and hands-on practical skills.



From left to right: Miss Nikita Joji (PLASTA President 2022/23), Mr Maniram Ragbir (BAPRAS President 2023/24), and Sydney Barnes (PRASSA UK President 2023/24) at the BAPRAS Congress 2023.

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Getting involved

PRASSA plans to continue its annual teaching series and provide tutorials on many aspects of the speciality that are not covered by the medical school curriculum. Other opportunities that will be offered to members include getting involved in research projects, essay and poster competitions, and more. It aspires to persistently provide valuable opportunities for its members while striving to improve the experience of medical students who are interested in plastic surgery. To get involved, follow @PRASSAUK on all social media channels and keep an eye out for any upcoming events PRASSA is planning!

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