



Learning, progressive development and the importance of masters: a lesson learned, a lesson to teach

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Today, the tumultuous advance of new approaches, materials and devices, not to mention the proliferation of advice, suggestions and guidelines, can create great confusion and thus uncertainty in the young surgeon. And if we also consider that, with the end of the pandemic, congresses (more or less prestigious) are back on the agenda, it is easy to see why less experienced surgeons wanting to perfect their technical skills, or trainee surgeons just embarking on their professional lives, feel somewhat overwhelmed by the huge array of often conflicting information available. Paradoxically, this information overload can, as mentioned, actually generate uncertainty and hamper professional progress.

Furthermore, social media resources, albeit constituting a valuable educational support when they are well organised and implemented by serious and recognised entities, can also add to the burden borne by those needing to learn.

First and foremost, it has to be understood that it is useless to start from the very latest advances: it is absurd to think of using the e-TEP procedure or performing a robotic TAPP to repair a primary epigastric or inguinal hernia without having first gained experience with simpler, more traditional techniques. It is sometimes rather painful to witness the complete technical ignorance of some surgeons who struggle to perform an autologous Bassini or Shouldice repair, a correct Lichtenstein procedure, or a simple open retromuscular-preperitoneal repair of an innocent epigastric hernia with diastasis recti.

The idea that less experienced surgeons, fascinated by the latest techniques, should use them from the outset is, in fact, both unthinkable and dangerous.

Today's wonderful achievements, such as the perfection of anatomical parts "prepared" and reconstructed with the help of robotics, are most certainly the result of a process that began with our masters and with the various techniques that have gradually been perfected and refined over the past fifty years. And to fail to acknowledge this is plain ridiculous, pathetic even.

The same applies to scientific and research activity and the prominence of the leading scientific societies. In other words, everything we have today is the more-than-legitimate offspring of that which was built before.

It is typical of mediocrity not to accept the truth of what has been said here, arrogantly assuming that today's successes are independent of those who generated them, depending only on those who are around today.

Progression, learning, teaching, and success are linked by a common thread that leads to the future, and is rooted in the past. And that is always the case.

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