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EXCESS SKIN FOLLOWING WEIGHT LOSS: CUTIS PLEONASMUS

Kreidstein, Michael L. M.D.

300 York Mills Road, Toronto, Ontario M2L 2Y5, Canada, drkreidstein@bellnet.ca

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Sir:

The excess skin that remains after weight loss is a unique problem of both cosmetic and functional significance. The term cutis pleonasmus is proposed for this heretofore unnamed condition.

As defined by *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, the word pleonasm is derived from the Greek *pleonasmos*, which means exaggeration or excessive, and *cutis* is Latin for skin. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* identifies the Latin *pleonasmus* as arising from the Greek *pleon*, meaning more. Furthermore, *Stedman's Medical Dictionary* defines a disease as being characterized by at least two of the following criteria: a recognized etiologic agent, an identifiable group of signs and symptoms, and consistent anatomical alterations. By these criteria, cutis pleonasmus is a legitimate disease entity.

Cutis pleonasmus is clearly distinguished from cutis laxa, or loose skin, a rare connective tissue disease manifested in part by skin hanging in folds. It is appropriate that this condition obtain its name in a plastic surgery journal, since plastic surgeons provide the essential surgical treatment for those so afflicted. Establishment of the term cutis pleonasmus will facilitate communication between clinicians (e.g., a patient with cutis pleonasmus of the arms, abdomen, and medial thighs). It will also help our patients, already physically stigmatized by the disease, by providing them with a more discreet means of describing their condition.