**AGENDA ITEM**

**OBITUARY**

**DR MICHAEL PATKIN AM, FRCS (Ed) FRCS (Eng) FRACS, Fellow HFESA  
GENERAL SURGEON and ERGONOMIST  
22 MAY 1933 – 4 April 2023**

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| Michael Patkin was a Melbourne born Australian surgeon, recognised internationally for his pioneering and life-long work on surgical ergonomics, particularly for micro-surgical and laparoscopic procedures. He was a Fellow of the Royal Colleges of Australia, Edinburgh and England, a Member of the AMA, and Fellow and past president of the Ergonomics Society of Australia and New Zealand. He won a Prince Philip Design Award for Needle-holder design in 1970 and was Adjunct Professor of Ergonomics in Surgery at Macquarie University Sydney.  As a newly qualified surgeon in London in the 1960’s Patkin studied the Human Engineering work of Tichauer (USA), Grandjean (Switzerland) and others, and realised that applying these skills to surgery could result in safer, less traumatic and more efficient operating, benefiting both patients, and the health system in general. His first paper on the topic “the Hand Has Two Grips” appeared in the Lancet in 1965. |  |

Returning to Australia Patkin spent 30 years in solo surgical practice in the industrial city of Whyalla in South Australia. Continuing research included hand function, tremor, access, handle design, lighting, theatre and instrument design. He wrote over 60 papers and book chapters on topics such as “Ergonomic Aspects of Surgical Dexterity”, “Ergonomics, Engineering and Surgery of Endosurgical Dissection”, “Surgical Heuristics” and the design of operating theatres and instruments. This was the time of micro-surgery and RSI problems, and Patkin was in demand to lecture on ergonomics to surgeons, industry leaders and others in Australia, New Zealand, USA, SE Asia, and Europe, while still maintaining his surgical practice and raising a young family.

Following retirement in 1999, Patkin was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for “Service as a Surgeon and to the Study and Practice of Ergonomics”.

He was also appointed to Honorary positions in the Department of Surgery at the University of Adelaide, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide, and the Department of Surgery at Flinders University, Adelaide. He continued to lecture and teach, particularly to those learning the “new” keyhole surgery.

Colleagues have described Patkin as an innovator, a great ambassador, and a wonderful thinker “whose profound insights live on in the minds of young surgeons”.

**For further information and a photograph please see: http://mpatkin.org/**

**Personal Information:**

Patkin met and married Margaret in the Channel Islands in 1961. He was the father of four children and grandfather to 6

*This obituary was provided by Dr Patkin’s wife Ms Margaret Patkin*