TIME TO WEIGHT REGAIN AFTER BARIATRIC SURGERY: TIME TO REFOCUS

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Introduction

Laparoscopic Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy are the two most common weight loss operations. There is a general acceptance that weight regain can occur in patients following bariatric surgery, but there is little consensus on when this occurs, contributing factors and how to address it. The aim of this study was to identify the time at which weight regain starts after surgery in patients undergoing laparoscopic bypass or sleeve.

Methods

Consecutive patients undergoing bypass or sleeve were selected from a prospectively maintained database. All patients were monitored closely by the dietetic, psychological and surgical team both pre- and post-operatively.

Patients who had gastric bands and revisional procedures were excluded. BMI and Percentage Excess Weight Loss (EWL) was analysed at 3, 6, 9, 12, 18, 24 and 60 months after surgery. Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS.

Results

119 patients were included in the study and no patients were lost to follow up. Their median age was 47.2 years (range 21.3 to 65.4) and 26.9% were male. Median baseline BMI was 51.6 (range 35.7 to 72). Baseline median excess body weight was 74.9kg (range 28.5 to 147.4).

61 patients underwent laparoscopic gastric bypass and 58 laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy. The median percentage EWL was maximum at 18 months overall (66.8%) and also for sleeve (61.6%) but 12 months for bypass (69.6%), as shown in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**.

Despite the trend towards weight regain overall, 33 patients (27.7%) and 19 patients (16.0%) continued to loose weight at 24 months to 60 months respectively.

Figure 1: Median BMI

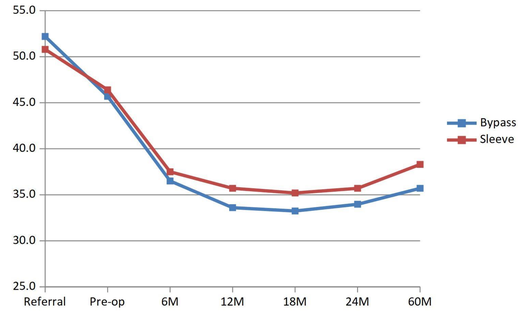
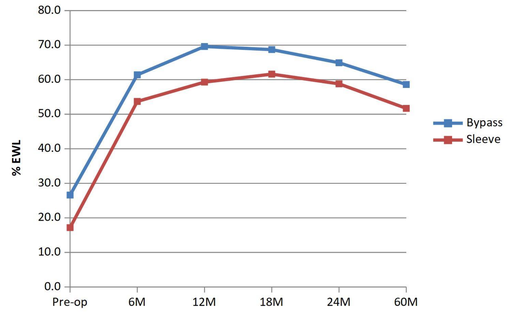


Figure 2: Median % Excess Weight loss



Conclusion

In this cohort, maximal weight loss occurs on average at 12-18 months after surgery and patients start to regain weight by 24 months. We suggest that 12 months is the time to refocus patients and the wider bariatric team into intensive dietetic intervention, intensive psychological intervention and even further surgical intervention (particularly where sleeve is used as the first stage of a two-stage operation).

The characteristics of patients who maintain or continue to loose weight at 5 years must be compared with those who regain in further studies to enable further personalisation of long term management strategies.