



Bariatric Surgery- A Life Changing Event

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Abstract

There are three main factors with an addiction: the spiritual malady, a physical allergy, and a mental obsession. Through research we know the most gruelling kind of addiction to quit are nicotine, alcohol and food. Going through these exhausting process people often given up especially when it is one of our daily needs to survive: food. With advancements in surgery we are able to help these people by providing them the option of Bariatric surgery. Statistics have shown, more than 200,000 people taking this option every year. Through this letter I share the insights I found when a patient undergoes one of such surgery to help change his life. The Bariatric surgery - a life changing event.

Keywords: Bariatric surgery, Lap band, Gastric sleeve, Obesity

Introduction

During my third year, I rotated with a general surgeon who specialized in bariatric surgery. My doctor used to tell me that while doing cholecystectomy or hernia repair, patients never used to feel that much difference in their life. However, after doing bariatric surgery and losing over more than 100 lbs patients used to hug the doctor and say thank you. He used to tell me bariatric surgery is a life changing event in a patient's life. I did not understand the significance until I myself saw his patients.

During my second week in the rotations, I met a patient named Victoria. She came for a follow-up visit after lap band (laparoscopic adjustable gastric band) which she had 10 months ago. She weighed almost 638 pounds (289.4 kilograms). She had morbid obesity for which she tried almost everything but nothing helped her. Currently, she weighs 290.6 lbs. Her goal weight is 180-190 lbs, she is very enthusiastic to reach there. She says she is able to move better, tie her shoes, work better and has more energy. She felt over-joyed with her success. Lap-band is the least invasive procedure available currently for bariatric surgery. Lap-band is constricting the stomach with a band which is filled with fluid, so that the stomach gets full with less food, resulting in weight loss. The fluid filled band can be constricted more or released more during the follow-up visits depending upon the patient's weight loss or any other symptoms.

The very next day, I met a 36-year male patient. He weighed 320 pounds. As I asked him what brings him to the office today; "I can't get rid of these excess fat which makes me feel tired all day" he replied with all his frustration. He continued saying that he had tried everything, but nothing worked. He was upset as he was recently diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus Type 2. He says he is too young to become a house of diseases. He also exclaimed that his kids are also upset with him as he cannot play with them, run with them, which makes him depressed.

I left the room after the history taking and physical exam, and presented the case to my attending physician. My attending and I entered the room. We started by providing him options like gastric sleeve, lap-band, by-pass surgery, along with explaining risks of the procedure as well as life after the procedure. Along with that we advised him to attend social groups and be mentally prepared for this change.

My experiences with these patients reinforced the damaging effects of morbid obesity. An important question which arises is do we really need bariatric surgery? The goal is to give hope to the patients who have been affected physically, mentally, and emotionally by morbid obesity. Weight loss achieved by bariatric surgery is also associated with various changes in the patient's life and body that help to reduce defects in fat metabolism. With extended weight decrease, patient feels more active and more confident about themselves. Moreover, extended physical activity united with bariatric surgery may oftentimes improve the body's ability to reduce fat, leading to a helpful individual mind set, and decrease sentiments of uneasiness. Huge weight decrease, on account of bariatric surgery, reduces hormones, for instance, insulin (used to control sugar levels) and cortisol (stress hormone) and improves the body functioning reducing obesity-related diseases. Bariatric surgery changes the patient's life both physically and mentally. After reducing weight, they feel good about themselves, are more active, reduce taking medications for obesity-related illnesses. Patient mentally is stronger and more confident about themselves.

Statistics have proven that people without bariatric surgery who have reduced weight are about 5% which is equal to the percentage of the population who believes Elvis Presley is alive. Whereas, the success rate with bariatric surgery is almost about 65-70%. After the surgery patients are going to sleep better, live better, feel better, and look better and transform their lives for good.

We need to do more for these patients including social support and giving them positive hope. We, as doctors, should not abandon them after the surgery, instead we should live this through with them.

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