

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Obesity and Bariatric Surgery

Summary

- Covid pandemic will affect all branches of medicine but the impact on bariatric surgery will be particularly harsher because of conscious and subconscious bias against those suffering from obesity.
- Based on the Getting It Right First Time (GRIFT 2017) report, less than 0.6% of patients eligible for bariatric surgery as per the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) criteria receive surgery each year in the United Kingdom.
- Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to make the pandemic of obesity worse as vast populations across the globe live in lockdown conditions without any physical work out
- Studies have shown that large number of overweight or obese patients who require intensive care after COVID-19 infection are more likely to die. Hence, it is worth mentioning that long waiting times for surgery and its clinical consequences are associated with an increase in morbidity and mortality.
- Bariatric surgery has a significant learning curve and there will be a risk that when surgeons are not able to operate for months, they might deskill especially those still in their learning curve. It is, therefore, important that surgeons keep up with their skills by video webinars and technical discussions virtually.
- To reduce the rate of errors and enhance overall safety when we restart bariatric surgery, it may be worth designing procedure specific “time out” forms for use at the end of the procedure.