Factors influencing weight regain following bariatric surgery

Introduction & Aim

Following weight loss surgery, some people struggle to maintain their new lower weight, and regain some or all of their lost weight. The main aim of the research study was to find out what factors seem to influence whether or not someone regains weight following bariatric surgery.

Participants and Study Design

Seven participants were recruited by their usual care team. Inclusion criteria:
- Patients who consider themselves to have weight regained
- Had a bypass or sleeve within the previous 20 years

Exclusion criteria:
- Patients with an overt eating disorder
- Patients receiving psychological intervention for their weight
- Patients who are unable to converse fluently in English
- Patients who are unable to provide informed consent.

See table for participants characteristics including weight details and pre surgery input. Participants were interviewed and data analysed according to Grounded Theory.

Results

Analysis identified themes that might indicate risk of weight regain.

Pre-operative behaviours included:
- A history of ‘yo-yo’ dieting
- A lack of weight loss before surgery (despite engagement with specialist services).
- Behaviours present before and after surgery included:
  - Eating habits and behaviours inconsistent with weight management
  - Comfort eating or drinking
  - Post operatively;
    - The diminishing effects of surgery
    - Inadvertent sabotage
    - Lack of self monitoring
    - Lack of post operative support.

Conclusion

Identifying patients likely to struggle following bariatric surgery should be a priority for health care professionals. These people should not be denied surgery for their severe obesity, but identification of new strategies or care pathways should be considered to help identify these individuals before surgery.

Direction for further work

There will be a cohort for patients who have undergone bariatric surgery and failed to maintain their new weight despite surgical success. The participants in this study proactively engaged with specialist follow up - but not every patient will do this.

...I just felt really embarrassed and ashamed that it was going back on...

References:

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The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Aintree University Hospital NHSFT, DWP, NISER, DWP, and the Department of Health.