Device launched to improve weight loss surgery

April 12 2011

Irish company Crospon have announced the launch of a new tool, an imaging catheter called the EF-620, to improve the outcome of weight loss surgery.

The product is the latest addition to the company's existing EndoFLIP imaging system. Development of this new product, which enables surgeons to measure the size of the stomach and passageways during weight loss surgery, was supported by a £1 million Wellcome Trust Strategic Translation Award.

With high-income countries gripped by a so-called 'obesity epidemic', weight loss surgery is becoming one of the fastest-growing categories of surgical procedures. Weight loss surgery involves reducing the size of the stomach to limit the amount of food that a person can consume. This can be achieved by removing a portion of the stomach, a procedure known as sleeve gastrectomy, or by fitting a band around the upper stomach to reduce its volume, known as gastric banding. Another recent development involves stitching the stomach to create a pouch or sleeve with reduced volume, known as gastric imbrication.

Until now, surgeons had no reliable means of quantifying and standardising the pouch size. In the case of gastric band procedures, the possibility of measuring tightness at time of surgery could also result in a reduction of the number of adjustments and follow-up procedures.

John O'Dea, CEO of Crospon, explains: "Extra care has to be taken by

the surgeon to ensure that a gastric plication sleeve is not stitched too tightly. A challenge of the procedure is that the surgeon has very limited ability to gauge the size of the sleeve being created. EndoFLIP provides a unique capability to allow the surgeon to measure the inner diameter of the sleeve as it is being created. We believe that the ability to measure the sleeve size during this procedure will be essential to allow such sleeves to be created safely and consistently."

Earlier this year, Crospon received approval from the US Food and Drugs Administration to market the EF-620 specifically for sleeve gastrectomy and gastric imbrication procedures. Last year, the company also launched a product to facilitate gastric banding.

O'Dea said: "Sleeve gastrectomy is one of the fastest-growing bariatric surgery procedures, and the EF-620 catheter is specifically purposed for these procedures. We are particularly excited about the application of the EF-620 for the emerging 'gastric imbrication' (or 'gastric plication') sleeve procedure. This procedure is growing in popularity on account of its relatively low cost, and for the fact that no implant is required, nor is any stomach required to be removed."

The new product could allow reproducible measurement of sleeves to help surgeons investigate why for some patients surgery is unsuccessful. Ultimately, it could greatly improve the success rates of weight loss surgery.

Richard Seabrook, Head of Business Development at the Wellcome Trust, commented: "We are delighted that Crospon have been successful in bringing this latest product to market and we look forward to seeing the results of other ongoing clinical trials to assess its role in bariatric surgery."

Provided by Wellcome Trust