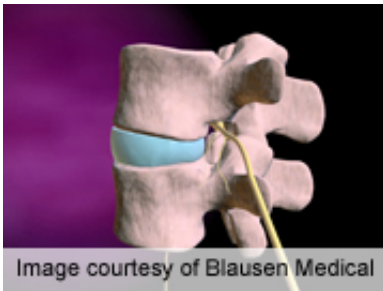


# Morbid obesity ups complication rate in spinal fusion surgery

June 5 2012

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Morbid obesity increases the risk of multiple complications in spinal fusion surgery, particularly in patients undergoing anterior cervical or posterior lumbar procedures, according to research published in the May 15 issue of *Spine*.

(HealthDay) -- Morbid obesity increases the risk of multiple complications in spinal fusion surgery, particularly in patients undergoing anterior cervical or posterior lumbar procedures, according to research published in the May 15 issue of *Spine*.

To investigate whether [morbid obesity](#) impacts rates of complications and [hospital charges](#) in patients undergoing spinal fusion, Paul A. Kalanithi, M.D., from Stanford University Hospitals and Clinics in California, and colleagues retrospectively analyzed all spinal fusions performed in California from 2003 to 2007. Data from the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project's California State Inpatient Databases were used to identify normal-weight and [morbidly obese](#) patients admitted for

four types of spinal fusion: anterior cervical, posterior cervical, anterior lumbar, and posterior lumbar.

The researchers found that, of the 84,607 admissions, 1,455 patients were morbidly obese. Morbid obesity correlated with higher in-hospital complication rates (13.6 versus 6.9 percent), which were seen across nearly all complication types, including cardiac, renal, pulmonary, and wound complications. Mortality was slightly, but significantly, higher among the morbidly obese (0.41 versus 0.13 percent; P

"Morbid obesity seems to increase the risk of multiple complication types in [spinal fusion surgery](#), most particularly in anterior cervical and posterior lumbar approaches," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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