

Obese patients improve physically and mentally after bariatric surgery

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Bariatric surgery, or reduction of gastric capacity, is one of the longer lasting options to achieve considerable weight loss in obese people. A Spanish researcher has participated in a study that confirms that the effects of this relatively complex medical surgery are not only physical but also psychological.

Quality of life for a person with obesity who undergoes bariatric [surgery](#) improves significantly. This type of surgery induces [weight loss](#) through the reduction in gastric size and capacity. Now a new study including work by a Spanish researcher also analyses the [psychological consequences](#) of surgery.

Previous studies (Sikorski et al., 2011) have demonstrated that in addition to the physical consequences for health, [obese people](#) face considerable social stigma. Up to now, surgeons used the amount of weight lost as the main postoperative outcome, without taking into account other associated [medical conditions](#).

Alejandro Magallares, researcher at the National University of Distance Education (UNED) and co-author of the study, reviewed 21 scientific articles regarding the relationship between quality of life and weight (gauged with the questionnaire SF-36, which sheds light on the state of health of the person) in the obese population before (2,680 subjects) and after (2,251 subjects) undergoing this surgery.

"An increase was found in the quality of life related to both

psychological and physical aspects after the surgical intervention," Magallares explains to SINC. The results are published in the journal *Psychology, Health & Medicine*.

For the authors, this study comprises the most up-to-date and complete information on the quality of life related to health in obese people before and after [bariatric surgery](#).

These procedures cause dynamic changes in the size and form of the stomach, which can cause certain post-surgical gastrointestinal complications such as diarrhoea, constipation and vomiting. Despite this, the positive effects were seen to be extremely important, especially in the case of quality of life regarding physical aspects.

"Both physical and psychological health improve after the operation, and that increase in quality of life is especially significant in the physical area," stresses the Spanish scientist.

Beyond aesthetics

According to the Spanish Society of Surgery for Morbid Obesity and Metabolic Disorders, "Bariatric surgery is not [cosmetic surgery](#), not free from risks, not easy and not magic. Just like any other obesity treatment, it requires changes in lifestyle and healthy eating to guarantee results in the medium and long term."

The experts believe that it is an alternative which offers longer lasting results for people for whom clinical strategies (such as diet and exercise) have failed. The surgeries performed have two objectives: to reduce the intake of food and the capacity of absorption.

It is only intended for morbidly obese patients with a body mass index (BMI) of over 40 kg/m², or rather those with severe obesity and

associated conditions. This surgery is not recommended for people with a BMI of less than 35 kg/m², instead there are other non-surgical, pharmacological and dietary-behavioural treatments.

More information: 'Mental and physical health-related quality of life in obese patients before and after bariatric surgery: A meta-analysis'.

Psychology, Health & Medicine, 2014.

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