imma™

Crest (TOI)

Weight-loss op: from fad to cure

Date: 09-04-2011 | Edition: Delhi | Page: 17 | Source: Bureau | Clip size (cm): W: 27 H: 14

Clip: 1 of 2

Weight-loss op: from fad

Surgery now a viable treatment for 'diabesity'

KOUNTEYA SINHA
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

For nearly five years, Dinesh Rao, 33, tried to control his diabetes and high blood pressure by popping pills, but to no effect. According to doctors, Dinesh's main problem was his weight. At 173 kg, he was suffering from what they called "diabesity" — diabetes caused by obesity. Their recommendation: gastric bypass or stomach-stapling surgery. Dinesh went under the knife in 2008 and today he has not only come down to 80 kg but also been cured of both diabetes and high BP.

Till about five years back, weight-loss surgeries were a fad for the affluent.

But now, these are viewed as a feasible option for patients suffering from diabetes, morbid obesity and high BP. The combination of obesity and type 2 diabetes is looming as one of the big public health issues in the world.

According to Dr Pradeep Chowbey, Dinesh's surgeon and director of Max Healthcare Institute of Minimal Access, Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, there has been a 82 per cent success rate in metabolic surgeries in India. For patients suffering from diabetes or high BP for less than 10 years, the rate is as high as 99 per cent.

For long, bariatric or weight-loss surgery has been considered as the last resort. But now the International Diabetes Federation has endorsed it as a viable treatment of diabetes. In a significant move last week, 20 leading experts in diabetes and bariatric surgery recommended it as a cost-effective treatment option for severely obese people with type 2 diabetes. They said there was increasing evidence that the health of obese people with type 2 diabetes, including their glucose control and other obesity related comorbidities (conditions), can benefit substantially from bariatric surgery.

Professor John Dixon, head of obesity research unit in Monash University, Melbourne, noted: "Almost all severely obese patients cannot achieve and maintain significant weight loss. They should be treated where appropriate with bariatric surgery which can lead to remission of diabetes in up to 80 per cent of patients."

According to Professor Paul Zimmet of the IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute, Melbourne, bariatric surgery is recommended for those with type 2 diabetes and obesity when they are not achieving recommended treatment targets with existing medical therapies, especially when there are other major comorbidities like hypertension, high cholesterol or sleep apnea. "Surgery should be an accepted option in people who have type 2 diabetes and a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or more."

The two most common and succesful metabolic surgeries taking place in India now are the gastric bypass and the gastric sleeve surgeries conducted laparoscopically.

Bariatric surgery can lead to remission of diabetes in up to 80 per cent of severely obese patients, say experts

In gastric bypass or stomach stapling surgery, the stomach is reduced to a thumb-sized pouch that holds less food. The patient will not be able to eat as much as before and the body will not absorb all the calories from the food eaten. "That way, we maximise the function of the insulin already available in the body. So not only does your weight fall, you no longer need insulin

© CORBIS

Crest (TOI)
Weight-loss op: from fad to cure
Date: 09-04-2011 | Edition: Delhi | Page: 17 | Source: Bureau | Clip size (cm): W: 27 H: 14
Clip: 2 of 2

l to cure

enhancing medicines or shots," said Dr Chowbey.

The second procedure is the gastric sleeve surgery in which the surgeon removes 85 per cent of the stomach so that it takes the shape of a tube or sleeve. Most people who have gastric sleeve surgery lose 80 per cent of their excess body weight over the first six months to one year and it helps improve diabetes, high BP, high cholesterol and sleep apnea within one to two years.

The third option is the ileal interpositon surgery or the cut paste solution to treating diabetes. In this, the last portion of the intestine is cut and placed closer to the stomach. The ileam produces the hormone GLP 1 which helps in insulin secretion. "The increased weight in overweight and obese individuals has a strong impact on the cardiovascular system causing an alteration in the normal functioning and predisposing the individual to coronary heart disease, cardiac failure and sudden death. As the individual's weight increases, the body's response is to increase the blood volume, plasma volume and all cardiac outputs. We have observed that many of the cardiovascular comorbidities that are resulting from obesity are predominantly reduced or even eliminated with weight loss," Dr Chowbey added.

So how much do these surgeries cost? Roughly around Rs 2 lakh. But with diabesity becoming fairly common in India, surgery may be the only remedy. ■