

**THE COMPLICATIONS OF BARIATRIC SURGERY  
IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

R J Thompson, M J Mullan, W B Clements, J A Kennedy *Royal Victoria Hospital,  
Belfast, Northern Ireland*

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**Introduction** Bariatric surgery has increased by 530% in the UK in the past 6 years. Benefits include weight reduction, improvement in weight related co-morbidities and cost-effectiveness compared to conventional weight reduction programmes.

**Aims/Background** NICE clinical guidance 43 recommends that bariatric surgery be considered for patients with a BMI >40 or >35 with other co-morbidities. There are over 25,000 with a BMI >40 in Northern Ireland (NI). Bariatric surgery is not commissioned on the NHS in NI. Despite this, clinicians in NI increasingly have to treat its complications. This study was undertaken in order to review the complications of bariatric surgery that have presented to our hospital in the past 6 years.

**Method** The hospital PAS system was interrogated for codes relating to emergency admissions due to complications following bariatric surgery between 2007 and 2012.

**Results** There were 38 admissions across 32 female patients. Thirty had a gastric band, 1 bypass and 1 gastric balloon. Only one of the procedures was performed in NI. The mean length of stay was 6 days (range 1–20). The mean time since the procedure was 32 months (range 0–120). Complications included abdominal pain, vomiting, infected ports, internal hernia, infected bands, band erosion and gastric/oesophageal perforation. Twenty-five bands and 2 ports were removed.

**Conclusion** It is anticipated that healthcare professionals in NI will continue to see increasing numbers of patients admitted with complications from bariatric procedures. Regardless of the current lack of commissioning for bariatric services, significant expertise and resources will continue to be required in order to manage these patients.