

Overcoming the Battle of the Bulge



The mood was euphoric as operated patients met each other and shared their experiences with people embarking on a weight loss journey. The public awareness seminars organised by Times Wellness and Bombay Hospital had Dr Ramen Goel, metabolic surgeon, Bombay Hospital, explaining the mechanism of control of obesity and diabetes, while quoting extensively from available scientific data.

At the Bandra seminar, 35-year-old B Hingorani (name changed), a company executive, excitedly shared that within seven months of the gastric bypass, she has not only lost over 38 kgs but has gone off medication for diabetes. On questioning by others, she shared that she eats upto 2 chapatis per meal and her family and friends have appreciated her transformation.

Sulochana (name changed), 26, a call center executive confided with the group at the Thane seminar that her excited father is already on the look out for a suitable boy for her. Weighing at 65 kgs, Sulochana has lost over 32 kgs in six months after sleeve gastrectomy.

The story of Chembur resident Hitesh Advani (name changed), whose parents and family physician were initially wary of bariatric surgery, was an instant hit with the audience present at the Bandra seminar. His sleep patterns are now healthy and work efficiency has improved considerably after losing over 32 kgs post-gastric bypass. He also added that he has been reimbursed in full by the medical insurance company for his surgery.

"Even a lower middle-class patient can manage to undergo the gastric bypass surgery," explained Padmawati, a resident of BDD chawls, Worli to the audience at the Bombay Hospital seminar. With her initial weight of 116 kgs, she had difficulty in walking. Now, 46 kgs lighter, she not only walks long distances, but also does household work like cooking, and doing the dishes with ease. She plans to get her daughter operated as well.

Dr Goel explained the mechanism of surgical control of diabetes. Bariatric surgery is known for over 40 years and over 80 per cent patients maintain blood sugar levels even 14 years after surgery. For thin type-2 diabetes patients, ileal interposition surgery has shown promising results in early experience. Over 600 patients have undergone this surgery and almost 90 per cent of them are maintaining significant blood sugar control.

His first patient for surgical control of diabetes, Vrajendra Singh, is maintaining normal blood sugar levels with only one tablet per day as compared to four to five tablets per day before surgery. "We expect to stop even this medicine within 15-20 days," said Dr Goel. Dr Goel offered to accommodate 8-10 patients in various bariatric surgical workshops at minimal costs over the next three months.