Adolescent bariatric surgery: a systematic review of recommendation documents

Today, there is some evidence that shows that bariatric surgery – for carefully screened adolescents – can be “more effective for treating severe obesity and related co-morbidities than lifestyle changes, medications, or supervised weight loss programmes.” Despite increasing evidence, the amount of annual bariatric surgeries occurring every year remains low. Recommendation documents however have a real role to play in educating providers and addressing any outstanding concerns. This systematic review was therefore conducted “to generate a complete record of all US recommendation documents and describe variability across the documents.” The overarching objective of the review was “to describe the variability in guidance offered to providers across the documents, without making clinical recommendations.”

Three types of recommendations were selected for inclusion: clinical practice guidelines, position statements and consensus statements. Based on a list of criteria and after screened for eligibility, 16 recommendation documents were included for analysis. Overall, it was found that clinical practice guidelines “provided the most comprehensive guidance for adolescent bariatric surgery.” However, it was found that there was high variability between the documents. The results of this study highlighted that the “gaps in recommendation documents suggest opportunities to improve guidance to providers and strengthen the underlying evidence base.” Consequently, this systematic review therefore stresses the need for “updated recommendations for adolescent bariatric surgery.”