

Do surgical interventions to treat obesity in children and adolescents have long-versus short-term advantages and are they cost-effective?

Across Europe, the prevalence of childhood and adolescent obesity has increased over the past decades, leading to non-negligible associated costs and morbidities. Currently, there is a lack of clear-cut evidence to identify the success and cost-effectiveness of non-surgical interventions to treat childhood obesity. Consequently, many medical practitioners are now turning towards surgical treatment options such as bariatric surgery. This review aimed to look at the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of surgical interventions for overweight and obese children and adolescents.

Through the identification of some of the concerns about surgery to treat obesity among children, the report also identifies a series of policy considerations. Overall, the report provides “some evidence to suggest that bariatric surgery in severely obese adolescents can result in significant weight loss, and improvement in co-morbidities and quality of life.” However, “a conservative approach to child and adolescent bariatric surgery is warranted until further long-term studies on the subject are conducted.”

Reference: Aikenhead A, Knai C, Lobstein T. *Do surgical interventions to treat obesity in children and adolescents have long-versus short-term advantages and are they cost-effective?* 2012. <http://www.euro.who.int/pubrequest>.