Surgery for the treatment of obesity in children and adolescents

Globally, the prevalence of overweight and obese children and adolescents is on the rise. The main aim of treatment interventions is to define the most suitable intervention approach dependent on a child’s age as well as the degree of excess weight. Bariatric surgery has been established as an effective treatment for severely obese adults. However, the potential of such an intervention in children and adolescents remains contested. Bariatric surgery aims to restrict food intake and reduce the absorption of food. The objective of this systematic review was to assess the effects of surgery for treating obesity in children and adolescents.

One published study was included in this review and compared laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding surgery to a multi-component lifestyle modification programme consisting of individual calorie reduction diet plans, increased physical activity and support through consultation with a healthcare practitioner every six weeks. Over the span of two years, the authors reported a mean reduction in weight of 34.6 kg for individuals who received the surgery, compared to 3.0 kg for those in the lifestyle intervention group. Despite promising results, due to a lack of randomised controlled trials in this field, the evidence is currently insufficient to make an informed judgment about the efficacy of laparoscopic surgery in children and adolescents.