

# Developing a long-term, community-based bariatric surgical follow-up service: patient and professional perspectives

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## I have the following potential conflict(s) of interest to report:

- **Receipt of grants/research supports:**
  - Celebrate Nutritional Supplements
  - MolyIncke
- **Receipt of honoraria or consultation fees:**
  - Olympus Medical
- **Participation in a company sponsored speaker's bureau:**
  - Intuitive
  - Olympus Medical



## Aim of presentation:

- To understand the needs of patients and professionals when developing a long-term community-based follow-up service or bariatric surgical patients

# Background:

- In the UK, bariatric surgical patients are discharged from hospital into the community following two years of follow up<sub>1</sub>
- NICE guidance for annual monitoring is ambiguous in terms of the role of General Practice<sub>1</sub>
- Published recommendations are not well known in General Practice
- Paucity of research on what is needed/wanted and resources available in the community from the perspectives of General Practice and patients
- Little collaborative research with the community in bariatric surgery
- Co-design means both parties have ownership and can actively participate from design to dissemination

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2014) Obesity: identification, assessment and management (CG189) London: NICE



# Methods:

- Patient participants were recruited from bariatric surgical clinic lists at STSFT
  - Time from surgery anywhere from 7 months – 8 years
- Healthcare professionals were recruited through snowball and purposive sampling
- Data was collected through video and telephone interviews June – October 2021
- Data was transcribed verbatim and analysed using a thematic analytic framework<sub>2</sub>
- A social constructivist theoretical lens was used
  - asserts that reality is shaped through interactions with others and influenced by life experiences, social norms and values<sub>3</sub>
  - This perspective aids understanding of participants' role and further illuminates findings

Braun V, Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 2006;2(2):77-101

Conrad P, Barker KK. The Social Construction of Illness: Key Insights and Policy Implications. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 2010;51(1 suppl):S67-S79.

## Results:

### Patient participant demographics:

- 14 patient participants (11 female, 3 male )
- Mean age = 51 years (30 – 70 years old)
- Mean time since surgery = 3.9 years (7 months - 8 years)
- Ethnicity: all participants stated ethnicity as White
- Procedures: 13 Roux-en-Y bypass, 1 OAGB
  - All were primary procedures



# Results:

## Professional participant demographics

- 16 professionals (11 female, 5 male)
- General Practitioners = 5
  - 4 General Practitioners
  - 1 General Practitioner/Commissioner
- Practice Nurses = 4
- Pharmacists = 7
- Ethnicity: White = 9 Asian = 3, Black = 2



# Themes: patient participants

- Needing formal longer-term support
  - Compliance
    - Slipping back into old habits
  - More psychological support needed
    - Dealing with aspects of life after surgery
    - No formal psychological support
  - Dealing with weight gain
- Issues pertaining to the pandemic





# Themes: professional participants

- Unsure of what is needed to support patients
- Lack of understanding about bariatric procedures
  - No formal learning about bariatric surgery (CPD, curriculum)
  - Little knowledge is self-taught
- Communication from bariatric unit is unclear and ambiguous
- Patients sometimes know more than the professional
  - Medication issues



## Discussion:

- Community Pharmacists and Practice Nurses were enthusiastic about:
  - The topic of bariatric surgery
  - Becoming more involved in long-term follow up and support of bariatric patients
- GPs had a variety of attitudes towards bariatric surgery
- Involvement of commissioners was crucial to recruitment and data collection
- Changes to national NHS commissioning has delayed next steps but discussions still taking place

# Reflections on the process



**Study was co-designed with commissioners, General Practice and patients**

Multiple perspectives aids understanding



**Patients were keen to participate**

Far more straightforward in terms of recruitment



**Able to recruit 13 participants 2 >years post surgery**

Illuminated the longer-term experience of follow-up in the community



**Professionals were difficult to recruit**

Time pressures

Perceived indifference to bariatric surgery

Needed to ensure we had a good cross section of attitudes towards bariatric surgery

- Participants sent study information to colleagues to try and address this

# Conclusions

- More research needed in collaboration with the community and patients
- General Practice environment challenging, but rewarding
  - Relationships established that will continue after this study
- Pandemic has impacted patients' journeys
  - Further, more formal long-term support needed
  - Psychological support needs embedding in follow-up
- Community healthcare professionals knowledge levels of bariatric surgery are low
- Opportunities for all healthcare professionals in the community to support patients
  - Multidisciplinary approach in the community needed

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