

National report on surgical treatment of obesity and metabolic disorder in Singapore

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According to the Singapore National Health Survey 2004, obesity rate (BMI > 30) in Singapore was 7.3% in female and 6.4% in male. Among the three major racial groups in Singapore, 4.2% of Chinese, 19.3% of Malays and 13.4% if Indians are obese. In 2004, 8.2% of the population was diabetic , with 8.9% of male and 7.6% of female. The latest unpublished data showed obesity rate has gone to 10.8% of the population in the 2010 National Health Survey, With the Malay population showing 25% obesity. DM rate however, has not changed over the last 12 years.

The Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society of Singapore is registered as of January 2011. A national database is being set up. Indication for surgery is generally in accordance with the Singapore Ministry of Health guidelines using the WHO standard for obesity on Asia, i.e. BMI > 37.5 or BMI > 32.5 with obesity associated co-morbidities. There is no metabolic surgery carried out outside the standard guidelines for obesity surgery.

There are about 10 surgeons performing bariatric surgery regularly in Singapore, carrying out about 200 procedures per year. 80% of these, divided equally, are sleeve gastrectomies and gastric bands. There are smaller numbers of bypass and other procedures.

There is no certified center of excellence in Bariatric surgery in Singapore. Cost varies according to where these procedures are carried out. A lot of those performed in government hospitals are heavily subsidised.