

AB109. SOH21AS198. The burden of bariatric surgery medical tourism on the Irish health service

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Background: Bariatric surgery is the most effective treatment for severe obesity. In Ireland, waiting lists for bariatric surgery are long, resulting in many patients seeking surgery abroad. With little or no postoperative follow-up in place upon their return, patients rely on public healthcare here for management of postoperative issues.

Methods: A retrospective review was performed to identify patients who presented to the emergency department at St Vincent's University Hospital from January 2015 to December 2020 with complications of bariatric surgery performed abroad. Patient demographics and all relevant clinical data were recorded.

Results: Over a five-year period, 40 patients (30 female) presented with complications related to bariatric procedures, with 50 ED attendances recorded. Most presentations related to gastric bypass (n=18, 45%) and sleeve gastrectomy (n=18, 45%) procedures while 4 were related to intra-gastric balloon placement. Patients had travelled to one of 16 international locations for surgery, with Turkey the most popular (12.5%). Intolerance to oral intake was the most common reason for seeking medical attention (23%) followed by gastrointestinal leak (20%)

and gallbladder pathology (18%). Twenty-eight (56%) presentations required admission, with an average length of stay (LOS) of 19 days. The mean LOS was significantly longer for patients with leaks (33.9 days). Eleven patients required radiological intervention, 4 required endoscopic interventions and 10 patients required surgical intervention. **Conclusions:** Complications arising from bariatric surgery abroad present a significant burden to our healthcare service.

Keywords: Bariatric surgery; bypass; complications; sleeve

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Footnote

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Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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