



Sean Woodcock MBBS MS FRCS



Biography

Sean Woodcock is a consultant laparoscopic surgeon based at North Tyneside hospital. He qualified from St Bartholomew's hospital in 1991 and trained in Manchester, Boston MA, Sweden and Australia. He specialises in surgery of the upper gastrointestinal tract and has set up a comprehensive bariatric service in the North East.

Does My Bum Look Big On This

Abstract

Over recent months there has been considerable publicity in the national news about the growth of obesity and the impact this has upon the health of the population. By 2050 50 % of the population are expected to be obese. Obesity is associated with many illnesses such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnoea, infertility in woman, some cancers and is directly related to increased mortality and lower life expectancy. Obese people are more likely to suffer from social and psychological problems, such as depression, prejudice, discrimination, stigmatization and low self-esteem. They take more sick days and both directly and indirectly place a massive burden on NHS resources. Both locally and nationally the time bomb that is the obesity crisis is inadequately resourced.

The only long term control of obesity is surgery however surgery can not be offered in isolation and patients require the help and dedication from a bariatric multidisciplinary team including surgeons, dietitians, psychologists, physicians, specialist nurses, physiotherapists and others. Surgery is not a quick fix and the best results are achieved by engaging motivated, informed and committed patients.

When developing our service in the Northeast every aspect of bariatric patient care was discussed amongst the professionals involved in the delivery of the service. Seating arrangements in the out patients, appropriate scales to weigh, cuffs big enough to accurately measure blood pressure and chairs within consulting rooms to avoid embarrassment. On the wards similar specialised furniture was required including a reinforced commode, zimmer frame and a dedicated bariatric bed that can care for patients of up to 50 stones in weight. Extra space within the wards was created, access to washing facilities, availability of appropriate hoists, surgical gowns and if the need arose suitable body bags. For those patients undergoing an operation we decided that they could walk to theatre, transfer themselves on to the operating table and position themselves into the correct position to avoid strains.

A close and healthy working relationship soon developed between the bariatric team and our manual handling advisor. Trials of furniture, beds, chairs etc to see if they could be easily moved around the hospital, were they robust, did they do the job did they come within budget.

Our local charitable development fund committee helped us to purchase such equipment and the first bariatric operation was performed in January 2006. The service has gone from strength to strength and to date we see 4 to 6 new patients each week and 12 follow patients, have performed 50 laparoscopic gastric band procedures, 40 gastric bypasses, 10 sleeve gastrectomies and 10 redo bariatric operations. We have helped set up a bariatric network with our colleagues in Sunderland to provide a comprehensive multidisciplinary bariatric service across the North East and have run 4 bariatric courses teaching other surgeons from around the country bariatric surgery.

The results have been excellent with patients losing weight, resolution of numerous medical problems like diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis and sleep apnoea. Patients get their lives back and there is now peer reviewed evidence that they live longer lives.

What is interesting is such equipment, patient care and nursing skills have been labelled as "bariatric" in that they exclusively belong to my team. HOWEVER with the increase in size of the population as a whole such "specialist" equipment should now be common place throughout any hospital, for any patient on any ward at any time.

So in answer to the question "does my bum look big on this" if the answer is yes you've got your work to do.