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Disclosure: Robert L. Lowes has disclosed no relevant financial relationships.

### From Medscape Medical News

## Bariatric Surgery Recommended for Obese Patients With Type 2 Diabetes



Robert Lowes

March 28, 2011 — Bariatric surgery is an appropriate treatment for people with type 2 diabetes who are obese, the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) announced today.

Although such operations cost anywhere from \$20,000 to \$30,000, they will reduce healthcare expenditures in the long run, according to a [new IDF position paper](#) on the subject. The surgery, the IDF explains, often normalizes blood glucose levels and reduces or avoids the need for medication.



**Dr. Francesco Rubino**

In addition, curbing diabetes can stave off costly complications such as blindness, limb amputations, and dialysis, said Francesco Rubino, MD, director of the IDF's 2nd World Congress on Interventional Therapies for Type 2 Diabetes, meeting today in New York City.

"When we talk about whether we can afford bariatric surgery, we have to ask what will be the cost if we don't treat the patient," Dr. Rubino told *Medscape Medical News*. "Studies have shown the surgery to be cost-effective. So there is a return on investment."

The IDF puts the lifetime cost of diabetes in the United States at \$172,000 for a person diagnosed at age 50 years and \$305,000 at age 30 years. More than 60% of this amount is incurred in the first 10 years after

diagnosis.

Under the new IDF guidelines, patients with type 2 diabetes warrant bariatric surgery when their body mass index is 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher, or when it is between 30 and 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and their diabetes cannot be controlled by medicine and lifestyle changes. This latter indication is even stronger when there are other major cardiovascular risk factors, including hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and a history of heart attacks, said Dr. Rubino, chief of the Gastrointestinal Metabolic Surgery Program at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

The body mass index action points can be reduced by 2.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup> for Asians.

The guidelines were drawn up by an IDF taskforce of diabetologists, endocrinologists, surgeons, and public health experts who met in December 2010.

### Trials Needed to Compare Surgical Procedures