

Body mass index and complications following major gastrointestinal surgery

Busra-Ozkan, B.; Nepogodiev, Dmitri; EuroSurg Collaborative; Bach, Simon; Bhangu, Aneel; Glasbey, James; Morton, Dion; Pinkney, Thomas; Sgro, Alessandro

DOI:
[10.1111/codi.14292](https://doi.org/10.1111/codi.14292)

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Document Version
Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):
Busra-Ozkan, B, Nepogodiev, D, EuroSurg Collaborative, Bach, S, Bhangu, A, Glasbey, J, Morton, D, Pinkney, T & Sgro, A 2018, 'Body mass index and complications following major gastrointestinal surgery: a prospective, international cohort study and metaanalysis', *Colorectal Disease*, vol. 20, no. 8, pp. O215-O225.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/codi.14292>

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Publisher Rights Statement:

(2018), Body mass index and complications following major gastrointestinal surgery: a prospective, international cohort study and meta analysis. *Colorectal Dis*, 20: O215-O225. <https://doi.org/10.1111/codi.14292>

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DR DMITRI NEPOGODIEV (Orcid ID : 0000-0002-2171-2862)

Article type : Original Article

157-2018.R1

Original Article (online only)

Body mass index and complications following major gastrointestinal surgery: A prospective, international cohort study and meta-analysis

EuroSurg Collaborative*

**Collaborating members are listed in Appendix I*

www.eurosurg.org; info@eurosurg.org; @EuroSurg

Correspondence: Dmitri Nepogodiev MBChB, Doctoral Research Fellow, Academic Department of Surgery, 2nd Floor, Institute of Translational Medicine, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TH, UK. Correspondence to: dnepogodiev@doctors.org.uk

Running title: BMI and surgical complications

Category: Original Research

Abstract word count: 250

Main body word count: 2809

Keywords: Postoperative Complications, Obesity, Digestive Tract, Gastrointestinal Tract, Body Mass Index, Body Weight.

Contributions: See end of manuscript.

This article has been accepted for publication and undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process, which may lead to differences between this version and the Version of Record. Please cite this article as doi: 10.1111/codi.14292

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Funding: None

Acknowledgement: We are grateful for the support of the European Society of Coloproctology for providing meeting facilities for the EuroSurg collaborator meetings in Dublin in September 2015, in Milan in September 2016, and in Berlin in September 2017, and also for assisting with study dissemination. The steering group is grateful to the Italian Society of Colorectal Surgery SICCR for endorsing the EuroSurg-1 Study protocol. We are grateful to the Birmingham Surgical Trials Consortium at the University of Birmingham for use of their servers for secure online data collection.

Ethical Approval: Ethical Approval was obtained from local ethical committees or institutional review boards by each local team in accordance with country-specific regulations.

What does this paper add to the literature?

There is conflicting evidence regarding the impact of obesity after gastrointestinal surgery. Our international data did not identify obesity as an independent risk factor for postoperative complications. Individual patient meta-analysis with previous data identified obesity to be associated with increased risk in cancer surgery, but decreased risk in benign surgery. .

Abstract

Aim: Previous studies reported conflicting evidence on the effects of obesity on outcomes after gastrointestinal surgery. The aims of this study were to explore the relationship of obesity with major post-operative complications in an international cohort and to present a meta-analysis of all available prospective data.

Methods: This prospective, multi-centre study included adults undergoing both elective and emergency gastrointestinal resection, reversal of stoma, or formation of stoma. The primary endpoint was 30-day major complications (Clavien-Dindo grades III-V). A systematic search was undertaken for studies assessing the relationship between obesity and major

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complications after gastrointestinal surgery. Individual patient meta-analysis (IPMA) was used to analyse pooled results.

Results: This study included 2519 patients across 127 centres, of whom 560 (22.2%) were obese. Unadjusted major complication rates were lower in obese versus normal weight patients (13.0% versus 16.2%, respectively), but this did not reach statistical significance ($p=0.863$) on multivariate analysis for patients having surgery for either malignant or benign conditions. IPMA demonstrated that obese patients undergoing surgery for malignancy were at increased risk of major complications (odds ratio 2.10, 95% confidence interval 1.49-2.96, $p<0.001$), whereas obese patients undergoing surgery for benign indications were at decreased risk (OR 0.59, 95% CI 0.46-0.75, $p<0.001$), compared to normal weight patients.

Conclusions: In our international data, obesity was not found to be associated with major complications following gastrointestinal surgery. Meta-analysis of available prospective data made a novel finding of obesity being associated with different outcomes depending on whether patients were undergoing surgery for benign or malignant disease.

Introduction

Obesity has reached epidemic levels in high income countries, with its prevalence expected to increase further over the coming decades (1). With one third of patients undergoing gastrointestinal surgery in the United Kingdom (UK) being obese (2), an understanding of the relationship between obesity and surgical outcomes is needed to optimise preoperative assessment and perioperative care. Whilst obesity is a recognised risk factor for cardiovascular and metabolic disease, there is conflicting evidence on its impact on postoperative complications after gastrointestinal surgery (3).

There is wide variation on the impact of obesity after gastrointestinal surgery in published reports. In some patient groups, no association (4,5) is identified between obesity and postoperative complications, whereas other studies have identified obesity as a risk factor for

increased postoperative complications (6,7). An “obesity paradox” has been proposed suggesting that obese patients may be at decreased risk of complications in some settings (8). Most previous evidence relies on retrospective analyses of registry data, which are limited by a high risk of bias. Inconsistent and selective outcome reporting are also key challenges in interpreting these results.

The primary aim of this study was to explore prospectively the relationship between obesity and major postoperative complications after gastrointestinal surgery in an international cohort, with a secondary aim to identify and meta-analyse all available prospective data regarding the relationship between obesity and major postoperative complications.

Methods

Study Design

This was a prospective, multi-centre, observational study delivered by an established network of students and trainees (9). A systematic search for previous evidence, followed by individual patient meta-analysis of pooled data, was also performed. The results are reported with consideration to the Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) and Preferred Reporting for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) Statements (10,11).

EuroSurg Collaborative

The EuroSurg Collaborative is a medical student- and surgical trainee-led research network. The collaborative was established in September 2015 at the tenth meeting of the European Society of Coloproctology, by delegates representing six European countries (9). Inspired by the medical student collaborative model developed by the Student Audit and Research in Surgery (STARSurg) network in the UK (12), the group sought to engage students and trainees across Europe in multi-centre surgical research.

Protocol development and dissemination

The pre-specified protocol for this prospective, multi-centre observational study was developed based on the STARSurg DISCOVER protocol (13). Medical students and surgical trainees were invited to work together in their local surgical units, under supervision from a senior surgeon, to collect data over a maximum of three pre-defined 14-day data collection periods in February – May 2016. Any hospital offering emergency or elective gastrointestinal resection in the Czech Republic, Republic of Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, and the UK was eligible.

Ethics and Study Approval

Across the seven participating countries, local collaborators and their supervisors registered the study according to national and institutional regulations. In some countries, this required formal research ethics approval with written patient consent. In the UK, this observational study was registered as a re-audit of DISCOVER (2). At all centres, approval was gained to collect anonymised patient data using a secure online Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap) system (14).

Inclusion criteria

Adult patients aged 18 years or greater undergoing gastrointestinal resection, reversal of ileostomy or colostomy, or creation of stoma as a primary procedure were included. Both elective and emergency procedures, using open, laparoscopic or robotic operative approaches were eligible. Patients undergoing appendicectomy alone were excluded. As the primary aim was to assess the effect of being overweight or obese, underweight patients (BMI <18.5 kg/m²) were excluded.

Outcome measures

The primary outcome measure was the 30-day major adverse event rate, defined as Clavien-Dindo grade III-V complications (15). These include the need for unplanned surgical, endoscopic, or radiological procedures under local or general anaesthetic (grade III), need for organ support in an intensive care setting or stroke (grade IV), and death (grade V). The secondary outcome was 30-day mortality.

Explanatory variables

The main explanatory variable was pre-operative BMI, calculated as weight divided by the square of height. Patients were stratified by BMI into three groups; normal weight (BMI 18.5-24.9 kg/m²), overweight (BMI 25.0-29.9 kg/m²) and obese (BMI ≥30.0 kg/m² or over). Preoperative variables were collected to risk adjust clinical outcomes. These included demographic parameters such as age and sex, as well as American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) and Revised Cardiac Risk Index (RCRI) scores (16).

Data Validation

A selection of participating hospitals identified independent data validators who had not been involved in the original data collection. These validators assessed their site's case ascertainment by independent review of theatre logbooks and operating lists. The case ascertainment rate was the proportion of all eligible patients who had been included in the original data collection. Validators also reviewed the data submitted from their site to determine data accuracy. This was based on validation of twelve predefined data fields (age; gender; ASA grade; history of ischaemic heart disease, congestive heart failure, cerebrovascular disease, insulin dependent diabetes, or chronic kidney disease; urgency of operation; pathology; operation

performed), and the primary outcome (30-day major adverse events). The data accuracy rate was the proportion of validated data fields that had been correctly completed by the original data collection team.

Systematic Review

A systematic search of bibliographical databases (PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science) was undertaken on 30 September 2017 by two independent reviewers to identify previous studies investigating the relationship between BMI and major post-operative complications after gastrointestinal surgery (Table 1S). Eligible studies involved adult patients undergoing oesophagogastric, colorectal, or liver surgery using any surgical approach. Case-control studies, cohort studies, and randomised controlled trials whose primary aim was to compare outcomes between normal weight versus overweight and obese patients using the standardised Clavien-Dindo classification for complications were included. Study abstracts were initially screened for suitability followed by inspection of full text manuscripts. Additional studies, not included in the database search, were identified by searching the reference lists of retained articles.

Statistical analysis

Simple summary statistics were used to summarise characteristics and outcomes across BMI categories, with categorical variables expressed as percentages and continuous variables as mean averages alongside the corresponding standard deviation (SD). Differences between categorical demographic groups were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis test, Welch's *t* test was used for continuous data, and the chi-squared test for proportions. Two-sided statistical significance was defined as $P < 0.05$ *a-priori*. To account for centre level variation, multilevel models were constructed using clinically plausible explanatory variables (11), with patient level factors considered as a level 1 fixed effects and hospital as a level 2

random effect. First order interactions were explored within the model, including interactions between indication (malignant or benign) and BMI which has been previously described (2). Effect estimates are presented as odds ratios (OR) with 95 per cent confidence intervals (CI) and *P* values to indicate statistical significance.

To assess the results of this study in relation to previous work, meta-analysis was pre-planned for all prospective studies identified in the systematic review, an individual patient level meta-analysis (IPMA) was performed. Only the DISCOVER study met the criteria to be included in meta-analysis. Individual data from the DISCOVER study for patients matching the EuroSurg study's inclusion criteria were pooled with the EuroSurg dataset. Briefly, a mixed-effects model was fitted with patient level explanatory variables as level 1 fixed effects, hospital as level 2 random effects and study as a level 3 random effect. Models were fitted and interactions checked as above. All statistical analyses were performed using R 3.2.1 (R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, AUT).

Results

Data was collected across 35 hospitals in the Netherlands, 30 hospitals in Spain, 23 hospitals in Italy, 20 hospitals in Turkey, 14 hospitals in the UK, 4 hospitals in the Republic of Ireland, and 1 hospital in the Czech Republic. Following exclusion of ineligible patients, a total of 2,519 patients were included in the analysis (Figure 1).

Data Validation

Independent data validation was performed in 74 centres across the 6 countries. The case ascertainment rate was 96.6% (1508/1561). Amongst 17,052 data fields that were validated, the overall data accuracy rate was 99.2%.

Demographics

Overall 41.4% (1044/2519) patients had a normal BMI, 36.3% (915/2519) were overweight, and 22.2% (560/2519) were obese. In the six countries that entered more than 50 patients in to the study, rates of obesity varied from 17.7% to 30.9% (Table 1). Overall, overweight and obese patients were older than normal weight patients (Table 2). Overweight patients were more likely to be male, whereas obese patients were more likely to have grade III-V ASA. There was no difference between the groups in the Revised Cardiac Risk Index scores. Malignancy was most commonly the indication for surgery for overweight and obese patients, whereas a greater proportion of normal weight patients underwent surgery for inflammatory bowel disease. Whilst there was no difference between groups in the proportion of procedures completed on an emergency basis, overweight patients were more likely to undergo open surgery than either normal weight or obese patients. Overweight and obese patients more frequently underwent gastrointestinal resection than normal weight patients (Table 3).

Post-operative major complications

The overall unadjusted 30-day major complication rate was 14.5% (365/2519). This varied from 13.0% (73/560) for obese patients to 16.2% (169/1044) for normal weight patients (Table 4). Overall unadjusted 30-day mortality was 2.4%. Univariate analysis (Table 5) identified that overweight (OR 0.80, CI 0.62-1.03, p=0.089) and obese (OR 0.78, CI 0.57-1.01, p=0.093) patients overall were not at an increased risk of 30-day major complications. Multilevel modelling found that amongst patients undergoing surgery for malignancy neither overweight (OR 0.73, CI 0.43-1.25,

p=0.257) nor obese (OR 1.06, CI 0.56-1.99, p=0.863) patients were at increased risk of serious complications.

Systematic review

A total of 6 studies (2, 17-21) were identified in the systematic review that presented primary data comparing major post-operative complications between healthy weight versus overweight and obese patients following gastrointestinal surgery (Figure 2). Five studies were retrospective, single centre studies that only included elective patients, leaving one prospective multi-centre study, the DISCOVER study (Table 6). Of the four studies reporting outcomes in patients undergoing surgery for malignancy (Table 7), only the DISCOVER study found obesity to be an independent risk factor on multivariate analysis for major complications (2), with the other three studies finding no association (19-21). Only the DISCOVER study reported outcomes in the sub-group of patients undergoing surgery for benign indications, finding no relationship between obesity and major complications. Two studies did not stratify patient outcomes according to whether the indication for surgery was benign or malignant; one found obesity to be independently associated with major complications (17), whilst the other study found no such association (18).

Individual patient data meta-analysis

Individual patient meta-analysis was performed on a combined DISCOVER and EuroSurg study datasets (Table 8). From the multilevel models, independent predictors for increased major post-operative complications included male gender, ASA grades III-V, and emergency timing of surgery. In the overall dataset, being overweight (OR 0.81, CI 0.64-1.02, p=0.070) was not associated with any change to risk of major post-operative complications compared

to normal weight patients, whereas being obese (OR 0.59, CI 0.46-0.75, $p<0.001$) was overall associated with a reduced likelihood of complications. Amongst patients undergoing surgery for malignancy, being overweight (OR 1.30, CI 0.95-1.79, $p=0.102$) was not associated with a higher risk of major post-operative complications, but obese patients were at increased risk (OR 2.10, 95% CI 1.49-2.96, $p<0.001$). Overweight patients undergoing surgery for benign indications had no change to their risk of major complications (OR 0.81, 95% CI 0.64-1.02, $p=0.070$), whereas obese patients were at decreased risk of complications compared to normal weight patients (OR 0.59, 95% CI 0.46-0.75, $p<0.001$).

Discussion

This prospective international cohort study explored the relationship between obesity and major postoperative complications after gastrointestinal surgery. Following adjustment, no difference was found between complication rates in normal weight, overweight, or obese patients. However, IPMA of prospective studies showed that in patients undergoing cancer surgery obesity was associated with an increased risk of major complications, whereas in patients undergoing surgery for benign indications obesity was associated with decreased risk.

The physiology of obesity and its impact on post-operative recovery is complex. Excess secretion of adipocytokine and macrophage recruitment are feature of obesity-related systemic inflammation which lead to low-grade chronic inflammation (22). Even in early disease stages visceral fat surrounding diseased non-malignant bowel, such as in Crohn's disease patients, has been shown to contain localised inflammation (23-25). These complex relationships between obesity and inflammation may explain the different associations in patients undergoing cancer surgery to those having surgery for benign conditions. Distinct pre-operative patient pathways for benign and malignant disease may also contribute to these differences. For example, cancer patients' risk of complications may be increased by

neoadjuvant chemoradiotherapy, whereas inflammatory bowel disease patients may be at higher risk if immunosuppressant drugs have been administered in the pre- and peri-operative periods. Although the exclusion of these factors from our models may be a limitation, this ensured we followed a pre-defined statistical plan based on the model previously developed in the DISCOVER study.

Of the studies identified in our systematic review, five focused on well-defined groups of elective patients (17-21), limiting their generalizability. Only the DISCOVER study reported prospective data, finding in a cohort of 7965 patients across 163 UK and Irish centres (2) that obesity was independently associated with an increased risk of major complications in overweight and obese patients undergoing surgery for malignancy, but not for benign indications (2). The current study's primary data failed to identify any association between obesity and major complications. This may be as it captured a broader and more heterogeneous international population, with lower rates of obesity than in DISCOVER's predominantly UK patients. Our primary data may also be underpowered to identify differences in complication rates between the BMI groups. The pooling by pre-planned meta-analysis attempted to address this limitation and identified a novel differential relationship between obesity and major complications, in that obese patients undergoing cancer surgery are at increased risk of major complications, whereas obese patients undergoing surgery for benign indications were at decreased risk compared to normal weight patients

The differential relationships identified in patients with malignancy and benign disease may also be partly related to selection biases. Surgery in high risk patients with benign conditions may be delayed or avoided altogether, whereas most cancer patients require timely surgical intervention, regardless of co-morbid status. Whilst pre-operative weight loss and pre-habilitation might offer a means of improving obese patients' outcomes, implementation of these programmes is complicated by the strict targets set by some health services for commencing definitive cancer treatment.

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A limitation of this study was the reliance on the snapshot of BMI taken at the time of surgery, with no data collected on pre-operative weight loss for example. Unintentional pre-operative weight loss is associated with increased cardiac complications, ventilator dependency, and mortality (26). Inclusion of pre-operative weight loss may have enhanced our models, but it was not feasible to collect this data within the constraints of this observational, student-driven study. Furthermore, whilst BMI is in routine clinical use because it is based on readily available non-invasive measurements, a meta-analysis of 32000 patients across 32 studies found a pooled sensitivity of 0.42 for the commonly applied BMI cut-off of ≥ 30 kg/m² for obesity (27), suggesting that BMI might fail to identify more than half of patients with high body fat. Moreover, an inverse relation has been observed between BMI performance and age, with BMI being less reliable in older individuals (28), who may exhibit “sarcopenic obesity” whereby lean mass is lost, with increased inter/intra-muscular fat (29). A further limitation of BMI is that it does not account for the relative distribution of visceral and subcutaneous fat. Although some studies have identified that only patients with high visceral fat are at significantly increased risk of complications, there is conflicting evidence regarding the significance of the visceral to subcutaneous fat ratio (30, 31).

In the UK, the STARSurg model of student-driven research increases students' understanding and confidence in clinical research (32), but in many countries research opportunities for medical students are limited (33). The EuroSurg Collaborative was founded with the aim of engaging students across Europe in high quality research (9); = it has already catalysed the foundation by Italian trainees of an independent trainee research network in Italy (34). The next EuroSurg study (35) will stimulate the development of further research networks across Europe.

Conclusion

Although in our international cohort study there was no association between obesity and postoperative complications following gastrointestinal surgery, made a novel finding of obesity being associated with different outcomes depending on underlying pathology. In patients undergoing cancer surgery it was associated with an increased risk of major complications, whereas in patients undergoing surgery for benign indications it was associated with decreased risk. Further research is required to understand the underlying pathophysiology of this effect, in order to inform improved management and pre-operative optimisation of patients undergoing surgery.

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Table 1: Prevalence of overweight and obese patients by country in the EuroSurg cohort study

| Country | Normal weight (N = 1,044) | Overweight (N = 915) | Obese (N = 560) |
|---------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| A | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 30 (5.4%) |
| B | 28 (2.7%) | 19 (2.1%) | 21 (3.8%) |
| C | 182 (17.4%) | 116 (12.7%) | 64 (11.4%) |
| D | 290 (27.8%) | 256 (28.0%) | 137 (24.5%) |
| E | 176 (16.9%) | 220 (24.0%) | 113 (20.2%) |
| F | 153 (14.7%) | 122 (13.3%) | 72 (12.9%) |
| G | 215 (20.6%) | 182 (19.9%) | 123 (22.0%) |

Table 2: Patient demographics in the EuroSurg cohort study split by body mass index group

| | | Normal weight (N = 1,044) | Overweight (N = 915) | Obese (N = 560) | P |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| Age | Mean (SD) | 62.1 (16.3) | 65 (13.2) | 63.9 (12.2) | 0.001 |
| Sex | Male | 561 (53.7%) | 577 (63.1%) | 298 (53.2%) | <0.001 |
| | Female | 483 (46.3%) | 338 (36.9%) | 262 (46.8%) | |
| Body Mass Index (Kg/ m ²) | Mean (SD) | 22.4 (1.7) | 27.1 (1.4) | 34 (5.1) | <0.001 |
| ASA grade | I | 150 (14.4%) | 108 (11.8%) | 35 (6.2%) | <0.001 |
| | II | 579 (55.5%) | 521 (56.9%) | 299 (53.4%) | |
| | III | 257 (24.6%) | 245 (26.8%) | 198 (35.4%) | |
| | IV | 50 (4.8%) | 31 (3.4%) | 22 (3.9%) | |
| | V | 2 (0.2%) | 2 (0.2%) | 1 (0.2%) | |
| | Missing | 6 (0.6%) | 8 (0.9%) | 5 (0.9%) | |
| Revised Cardiac Risk Index | No predictors | 819 (78.4%) | 688 (75.2%) | 401 (71.6%) | 0.086 |
| | One predictor | 170 (16.3%) | 166 (18.1%) | 121 (21.6%) | |
| | Over 2 predictors | 51 (4.9%) | 58 (6.3%) | 37 (6.6%) | |
| | Missing | 4 (0.4%) | 3 (0.3%) | 1 (0.2%) | |
| Urgency | Elective | 866 (83.0%) | 776 (84.8%) | 490 (87.5%) | 0.134 |
| | Emergency | 177 (17.0%) | 139 (15.2%) | 70 (12.5%) | |
| | Missing | 1 (0.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | |
| Operative Approach | Open | 621 (59.5%) | 497 (54.3%) | 325 (58.0%) | 0.014 |
| | Laparoscopic/ Robotic | 423 (40.5%) | 418 (45.7%) | 233 (41.6%) | |
| | Missing | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (0.4%) | |
| Smoking status | Non-smoker | 899 (86.1%) | 779 (85.1%) | 466 (83.2%) | 0.382 |
| | Current smoker | 145 (13.9%) | 135 (14.8%) | 94 (16.8%) | |
| | Missing | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (0.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | |
| Indication for surgery | Cancer | 637 (61.0%) | 619 (67.7%) | 387 (69.1%) | <0.001 |
| | Inflammatory bowel disease | 125 (12.0%) | 59 (6.4%) | 37 (6.6%) | |
| | Other benign disease | 282 (27.0%) | 237 (25.9%) | 136 (24.3%) | |
| Procedure type | Minor GI operation | 218 (20.9%) | 147 (16.1%) | 93 (16.6%) | 0.012 |
| | Major GI resection | 826 (79.1%) | 768 (83.9%) | 467 (83.4%) | |

Table 3: Procedures included in the EuroSurg cohort study split by body mass index group

| Operation | Normal weight (N = 1,044) | Overweight (N = 915) | Obese (N = 560) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Oesopagogastric resections | | | |
| Oesophagogastrrectomy | 9 (0.9%) | 9 (1.0%) | 6 (1.1%) |
| Total oesophagectomy | 14 (1.3%) | 6 (0.7%) | 9 (1.6%) |
| Partial oesophagectomy | 6 (0.6%) | 9 (1.0%) | 5 (0.9%) |
| Total gastrectomy | 29 (2.8%) | 25 (2.7%) | 11 (2.0%) |
| Partial gastrectomy | 42 (4.0%) | 35 (3.8%) | 20 (3.6%) |
| Gastroduodenectomy | 3 (0.3%) | 2 (0.2%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Small bowel resections | | | |
| Total excision of duodenum | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (0.1%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Partial excision of duodenum | 4 (0.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Total jejunectomy | 2 (0.2%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| Partial jejunectomy | 15 (1.4%) | 12 (1.3%) | 6 (1.1%) |
| Ileectomy | 48 (4.6%) | 35 (3.8%) | 23 (4.1%) |
| Ileo-caecal/ ileo-colic resection | 39 (3.7%) | 21 (2.3%) | 11 (2.0%) |
| Colonic resections | | | |
| Right hemicolectomy | 172 (16.5%) | 183 (20.0%) | 101 (18.0%) |
| Transverse colectomy | 6 (0.6%) | 5 (0.5%) | 2 (0.4%) |
| Left hemicolectomy | 44 (4.2%) | 55 (6.0%) | 28 (5.0%) |
| Sigmoid colectomy | 99 (9.5%) | 112 (12.2%) | 52 (9.3%) |
| Rectosigmoidectomy | 37 (3.5%) | 34 (3.7%) | 34 (6.1%) |
| Subtotal colectomy | 33 (3.2%) | 26 (2.8%) | 17 (3.0%) |
| Total colectomy | 20 (1.9%) | 12 (1.3%) | 9 (1.6%) |
| Rectal resections | | | |
| Abdominoperineal excision | 27 (2.6%) | 28 (3.1%) | 24 (4.3%) |
| Proctectomy | 14 (1.3%) | 14 (1.5%) | 7 (1.2%) |
| Anterior resection | 108 (10.3%) | 105 (11.5%) | 79 (14.1%) |
| Panproctocolectomy | 7 (0.7%) | 5 (0.5%) | 1 (0.2%) |
| Completion proctocolectomy & IPAA | 11 (1.1%) | 6 (0.7%) | 4 (0.7%) |
| Formation/ reversal of stoma | | | |
| Formation of colostomy | 53 (5.1%) | 33 (3.6%) | 18 (3.2%) |
| Formation of ileostomy | 29 (2.8%) | 16 (1.7%) | 13 (2.3%) |
| Closure of colostomy | 38 (3.6%) | 33 (3.6%) | 16 (2.9%) |
| Closure of ileostomy | 88 (8.4%) | 61 (6.7%) | 42 (7.5%) |
| Other proceures | | | |
| Other unlisted procedure | 46 (4.4%) | 32 (3.5%) | 22 (3.9%) |
| Missing | 1 (0.1%) | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |

IPAA: ileal pouch anal anastomosis

Table 4: Unadjusted 30-day outcomes by body mass index in the EuroSurg cohort study

| | | Normal weight (N = 1,044) | Overweight (N = 915) | Obese (N = 560) | P |
|--|-------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| Major complications (Clavien Dindo grade III- V) | No | 875 (83.8%) | 792 (86.6%) | 487 (87.0%) | 0.123 |
| | Yes | 169 (16.2%) | 123 (13.4%) | 73 (13.0%) | |
| 30-day mortality | Alive | 1021 (97.8%) | 886 (96.8%) | 552 (98.6%) | 0.092 |
| | Died | 23 (2.2%) | 29 (3.2%) | 8 (1.4%) | |

Table 5: EuroSurg cohort study univariate and multilevel analyses with major complications (Clavien-Dindo grades III-V) as outcome

| | | Univariable | | Multilevel | |
|---|----------------|------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| | | Odds ratio | P | Odds ratio | P |
| BMI | | | | | |
| | Normal | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | Overweight | 0.80 (0.62-1.03) | 0.089 | 0.88 (0.59-1.31) | 0.525 |
| | Obese | 0.78 (0.57-1.04) | 0.093 | 0.74 (0.45-1.22) | 0.237 |
| Age | | 1.01 (1.00-1.02) | 0.079 | 1 (0.99-1.01) | 0.847 |
| Sex | | | | | |
| | Male | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | Female | 0.70 (0.55-0.88) | 0.002 | 0.65 (0.51-0.83) | 0.001 |
| Previous surgery | | | | | |
| | Yes | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | No | 0.89 (0.71-1.11) | 0.292 | 0.85 (0.66-1.08) | 0.186 |
| Smoking | | | | | |
| | Non-smoker | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | Current smoker | 1.26 (0.93-1.69) | 0.120 | 1.3 (0.96-1.78) | 0.094 |
| ASA grade | | | | | |
| | I-II | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | III-V | 2.02 (1.61-2.53) | <0.001 | 1.81 (1.38-2.38) | <0.001 |
| Revised Cardiac Risk Index score | | | | | |
| | 0 | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | 1 | 1.17 (0.88-1.55) | 0.277 | 0.92 (0.67-1.26) | 0.584 |
| | 2 | 1.79 (1.17-2.67) | 0.006 | 1.23 (0.77-1.96) | 0.383 |
| Diagnosis | | | | | |
| | Benign | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | Malignant | 0.82 (0.66-1.03) | 0.092 | 1.02 (0.7-1.48) | 0.932 |
| Operative urgency | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| | Elective | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | Emergency | 2.69 (2.07-3.48) | <0.001 | 2.49 (1.85-3.35) | <0.001 |
| Operative approach | | | | | |
| | Open | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | Laparoscopic/robotic | 1.09 (0.87-1.36) | 0.474 | 1.07 (0.84-1.35) | 0.592 |
| Interaction variables | | | | | |
| BMI group by diagnosis | | | | | |
| | Overweight by malignancy | - | - | 0.73 (0.43-1.25) | 0.257 |
| | Obese by malignancy | - | - | 1.06 (0.56-1.99) | 0.863 |

Table 6: Studies included in systematic review

| Study | Country | Study Type | Patient population | Indication | | Urgency | |
|---------------|---------|-----------------------------|--|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | | | | Benign | Malignant | Elective | Emergency |
| Balzan (17) | France | Retrospective single centre | Liver resection | 219 | 465 | 684 | 0 |
| Pata (21) | Italy | Retrospective single centre | Gastrectomy for gastric cancer | 0 | 191 | 191 | 0 |
| STARSSurg (2) | UK | Prospective multicentre | Gastrointestinal and liver surgery | 5442 | 2129 | 4295 | 3038 |
| Tanaka (19) | Japan | Retrospective single centre | Hepatic resection for HCC | 0 | 202 | 202 | 0 |
| Wiggans (18) | UK | Retrospective single centre | Liver resection | 40 | 464 | 504 | 0 |
| Xia (20) | China | Retrospective single centre | Laparoscopic colorectal cancer resection | 0 | 527 | 527 | 0 |

HCC: hepatocellular carcinoma

Table 7: Major complication (Clavien-Dindo grades III-V) rates reported in studies included in systematic review

| Study | Normal weight | Overweight | Obese |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Balzan (17) | 5.8% (21/359) | 9.6% (22/228) | 13.4% (13/97) |
| Pata (21) | 11.1% (7/63) | 23.3% (17/73) | 12% (3/25) |
| STARSSurg (2) | 12.1% (307/2545) | 12% (322/2673) | 10.2% (279/2747) |
| Tanaka (19) | 23.9% (33/138) | 20% (11/55) | 11.1% (1/9) |
| Wiggans (18) | 16.8% (28/167) | 20.1% (42/209) | 19.5% (24/123) |
| Xia (20) | 5.9% (22/371) | 5.6% (8/142) | 14.3% (2/14) |

Table 8: Individual patient data meta-analysis with major complications (Clavien-Dindo grades III-V) as outcome

| | | Univariable model | | Multivariate model | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------|--------------------|--------|
| | | Odds ratio | P | Odds ratio | P |
| Age | | 1.01 (1.01-1.02) | <0.001 | 1.00 (1.00-1.01) | 0.079 |
| Sex | | | | | |
| | Male | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | Female | 0.69 (0.60-0.78) | <0.001 | 0.72 (0.62-0.82) | <0.001 |
| ASA grade | | | | | |
| | I-II | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | III-V | 2.13 (1.87-2.43) | <0.001 | 1.79 (1.54-2.07) | <0.001 |
| Revised Cardiac Risk Index score | | | | | |
| | 0 | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | 1 | 1.32 (1.13-1.54) | 0.001 | 1.06 (0.89-1.25) | 0.522 |
| | 2 | 1.82 (1.45-2.27) | <0.001 | 1.23 (0.96-1.57) | 0.102 |
| Diagnosis | | | | | |
| | Benign | 1.00 (reference) | - | - | - |
| | Malignant | 1.05 (0.93-1.20) | 0.424 | 0.86 (0.68-1.08) | 0.196 |
| Operative urgency | | | | | |
| | Elective | 1.00 (reference) | - | 1.00 (reference) | - |
| | Emergency | 2.33 (2.02-2.69) | <0.001 | 2.19 (1.86-2.58) | <0.001 |
| Body mass index | | | | | |
| | Normal weight | 1.00 (reference) | - | - | - |
| | Overweight | 0.93 (0.80-1.08) | 0.359 | - | - |
| | Obese | 0.78 (0.66-0.92) | 0.003 | - | - |
| Interaction variables | | | | | |
| BMI group by diagnosis | | | | | |
| | Overweight by malignancy | - | - | 1.30 (0.95-1.79) | 0.102 |
| | Obese by malignancy | - | - | 2.10 (1.49-2.96) | <0.001 |
| | Overweight by benign | - | - | 0.81 (0.64-1.02) | 0.070 |
| | Obese by benign | - | - | 0.59 (0.46-0.75) | <0.001 |

Figure 1: Flowchart of patient inclusion in observational study

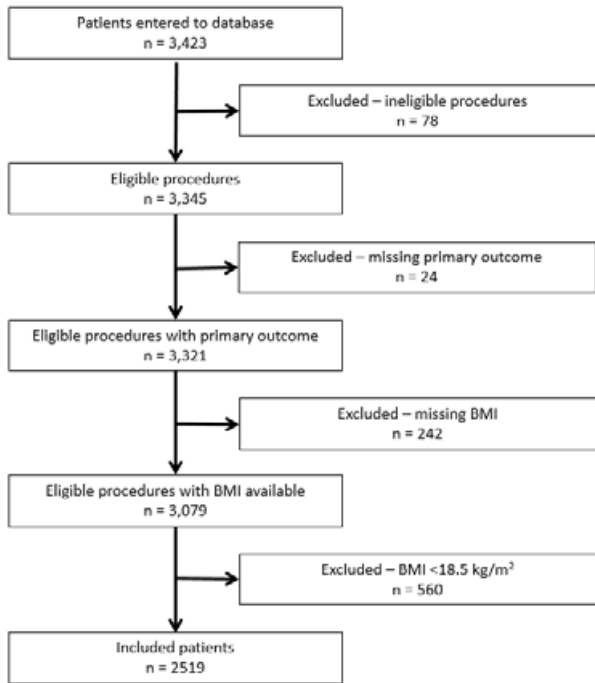
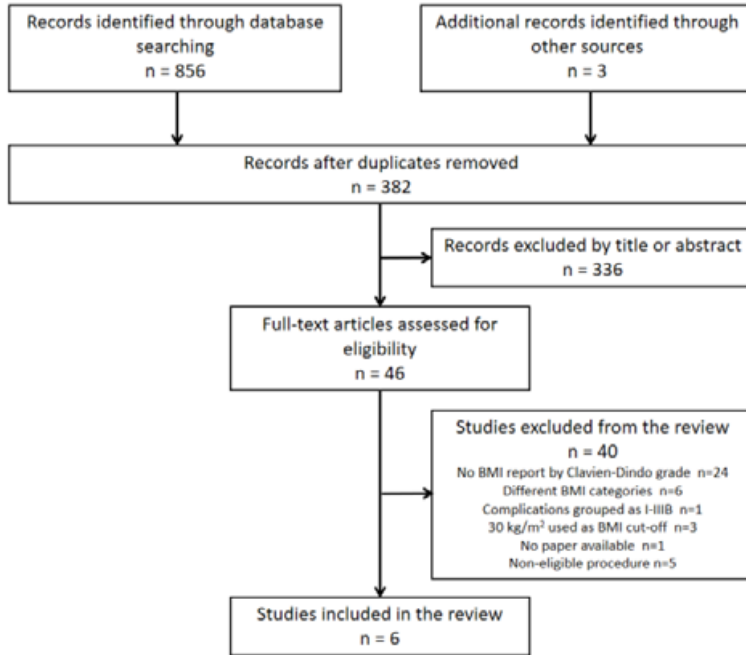


Figure 2: Flowchart of study inclusion in systematic review



Supplementary tables

Table 1S – PubMed Search strategy

‘surgery OR surgical OR operation OR operative OR operations OR postoperative OR perioperative’, and were then further limited by use of an ‘AND’ statement of the search terms ‘obesity OR overweight’, “‘body weight” OR “body mass index” OR BMI’, ‘complication OR complications OR adverse’, and ‘clavien OR dindo OR “clavien-dindo”’.

Appendix I: Collaborators

Writing group: *B. Busra Ozkan, *M. F. Bath, *R. Blanco-Colino, *S. Lee, *S. K. Kamarajah, *P. Vasko, *S.Z. Kuiper, *V. Farina, S. J. Chapman, T.M. Drake, L. Gavagna, S. Pasquali, F. Pata, G. Pellino, M. de la Rosa-Estadella, M. E. Stellingwerf, R. C. H. Stijns, D. Nepogodiev (overall guarantor)

**these authors contributed equally*

Statistical analysis: T.M. Drake (statistical guarantor)

EuroSurg-1 steering group: S. Z. Kuiper, M. E. Stellingwerf, R. C. H. Stijns, R. Blanco-Colino, A. Borrellas, M. de la Rosa-Estadella, M. F. Bath, S. J. Chapman, T. M. Drake, D. Golding, S. Lee, M. Ngaage, B. Busra Ozkan, P. Vasko, V. Farina, L. Gavagna, S. Pasquali, F. Pata, G. Pellino, D. Nepogodiev

EuroSurg-1 protocol development and dissemination: S. Z. Kuiper, M. E. Stellingwerf, R. C. H. Stijns, R. R. Van Tol, J. de Groof, H. de Wilt, W. A. Bemelman, S. Lee, L. McNamee, R. Blanco-Colino, A. Borrellas, E. Espin-Basany, M. de la Rosa-Estadella, B. Emre Baki, I. Ethem Gecim, O. Can Tatar, B. Busra Ozkan, S. Bach, M. F. Bath, A. Bhangu, K. Bresges, J. Burke, S. J. Chapman, H. A. Claireaux, T. M. Drake, N. Fearnhead, J. E. Fitzgerald, S. Gallagher, J. C. Glasbey, D. Golding, B. Gundogan, E. M. Harrison, J. Herson, C. Khatri, C. Y. Kong, A. Lyons, M. Mohan, D. Morton, D. Nepogodiev, M. Ngaage, T. D. Pinkney, A. Arezzo, V. Farina, C. Foppa, L. Gavagna, M. Morino, S. Pasquali, F. Pata, G. Pellino, M. Rubbini, F. Selvaggi, B. Sensi, G. Sica, Societa Italiana di Chirurgia Colo-Rettale

EuroSurg-1 Czech Republic National Committee: P. Vasko, J. Orhalmi

EuroSurg-1 Italian National Committee: V. Farina, C. Foppa, L. Gavagna, P. Naccari, S. Pasquali, F. Pata, G. Pellino, B. Sensi, A. Sgrò, ITSurg

EuroSurg-1 Netherlands National Committee: S. Z. Kuiper, M. E. Stellingwerf, R. C. H. Stijns, B. H. C. M. Burger, D. A. Fares, R. Spijkerman, T.R. van Elst, R. R. Van Tol, R. Wiersema, J. de Groof, L. P. S. Stassen, W.A. Bemelman

EuroSurg-1 Spain National Committee: R. Blanco-Colino, A. Borrellas, E. Espin-Basany, M. de la Rosa-Estadella, R. Rodriguez Garcia

EuroSurg-1 Turkish National Committee: B. B. Özkan, A. I. Tavuz, Z. S. Demirci, B. E. Baki, O. C. Tatar, I. E. Gecim

EuroSurg-1 United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland Committee: M. F. Bath, S. J. Chapman, T. M. Drake, D. Golding, S. Lee, D. Nepogodiev, M. Ngaage, STARSurg Collaborative

EuroSurg-1 Local Leads: *Czech Republic:* P. Vasko (University Hospital, Hradec Kralove); *Ireland:* P.J. Choi (University College Hospital Galway), H. O'Sullivan (St. James' Hospital, Dublin), H. O'Sullivan (The Adelaide & Meath Hospital, Dublin), M. Salman (Mayo University Hospital); *Italy:* A. Simioni (University of Padova), V. Farina (Molinetto Hospital), A. Sgrò (Policlinico San Matteo), B. Sensi (Policlinico Tor Vergata), F. Colombo (Ospedale Luigi Sacco), L. Turati (Treviglio Hospital), F. E. Cazzola (Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Sant Orsola Malpighi), F. Pata (Sant'Antonio Abate Hospital, Gallarate), G. Gallo (Department of Colorectal Surgery, S. Rita Clinic, Vercelli), G. Perrotta (Complesso Integrato Columbus, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino Gemelli), G. Pellino (Università della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli), L. Gavagna (Arcispedale Sant'Anna- Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria di Ferrara, Ospedale del Delta- Unità Sanitaria Locale di Ferrara), M. Papandrea (Policlinico Universitario c/o Campus S. Venuta), P. M. Naccari (Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste), N. Menduni (Ospedale S.S. Annunziata, Chieti), E. Rossi (Ospedale San Raffaele), N. Chetta (Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Consorziale Policlinico di Bari), F. Romeo (Ospedale San Valentino di Montebelluna), F. Giordano (Policlinico Paolo Giaccone), B. Randisi (Policlinico Paolo Giaccone, Palermo), G. Curletti (Ospedale Santa Corona di Pietra Ligure), C. Foppa (University of Florence); *Netherlands:* D. Aoulad Fares (Erasmus MC Rotterdam, Franciscus Gasthuis, Ikazia Ziekenhuis, IJsselland Ziekenhuis, Maastad Ziekenhuis), M. E. Stellingwerf (Amsterdam Medical Centre, Flevoziekenhuis, Tergooi Ziekenhuis, Onze Lieve Vrouwe Gasthuis), J. Kuiper (Admiraal de Ruyter Hospital), B. H. C. M. Burger (VU Medisch Centrum, Rode Kruis Ziekenhuis, Medisch Centrum Slotervaart), R. Wiersema (University Medical Center Groningen, Treant Zorggroep, Treant Zorggroep, Bethesda hospital), R. Spijkerman (Antonius hospital, Meander Medical Centre, University Medical Centre Utrecht, Diakonessenhuis, Zuwe Hofpoort Hospital), S. Z. Kuiper (Maastricht Universitair Medisch Centrum +, Maxima Medisch Centrum, Zuyderland), R. C. H. Stijns (Radboudumc, Catharina Hospital, Viecuri hospital, Canisius Wilhelmina hospital, Rijnstate Arnhem, Tweesteden hospital, Slingeland hospital), T. R. van Elst (MCH-Bronovo, Groene Hart Ziekenhuis, Het HagaZiekenhuis); *Spain:* A. Costa (Hospital Universitari Doctor Josep Trueta), A. Marcos Rodrigo (Hospital Universitario Nuestra Señora de Candelaria), R. Blanco-Colino, M. de la Rosa-Estadella, A. Borrellas (Hospital Universitari Vall d'Hebron), A. Sanchez (Hospital Clínico San Carlos), A. Varo Muñoz (Hospital Universitario Virgen del Rocío), C. E. Martinez Rios (Donostia University Hospital, Hospital Galdakao-Usansolo), D. Aliseda-Jover (Clinica Universidad de Navarra), D. Fernandez Nieto (Hospital San Agustín), I. Alvarez Reyes (Hospital del Mar), L. M. Dominguez Rodriguez (Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Ourense, Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Ferrol), M. I. Hernandez Ros (Hospital Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca, Hospital General Universitario Morales

Meseguer), O. Esteban Sinovas (Hospital Universitario Río Hortega, Hospital Clínico Universitario), P. Bartrina Soler (Hospital General de Granollers, Hospital Unviersitari General de Catalunya), P. Villarejo Campos (Hospital General Universitario Ciudad Real), R. Rodriguez Garcia (Hospital Universitario de Salamanca), S. Laguna Román (Hospital Clínico Universitario de Zaragoza), S. Fontanet-Soler (Hospital Universitari Joan XXIII), J. Raurich-Leandro (Hospital Universitario Arnau de Vilanova de Lleida), V. Dominguez-Prieto (H.U. Fundacion Jimenez Diaz, H.U. La Paz), J. J. Segura-Sampedro (Hospital Universitario Son Espases), F. Alconchel-Gago (Hospital Universitario Reina Sofia de Cordoba), C. Salazar-García (Hospital General Universitario de Alicante); *Turkey*: A. E. Gezen (Hacettepe University Hospital), Z. S. Demirci (Gazi University Medical Faculty), A. Sahin (Celal Bayar Universitesi Hafsas Sultan Hastanesi), H. Atasoy (Bezmialem Vakif Universtiy's Hospital), B. Yuksek (Duzce University School of Medicine), E. Arslan (Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Medicine), B. B. Ozmen (Acibadem University Atakent Hospital), A. Y. Sen (Dokuz Eylul University Hospital), H. I. Erol (Trakya University), E. Ucar (Istanbul School of Mecine), A. I. Tavuz (Medipol University Hospital), M. K. Aktas (Cukurova University Faculty of Medicine Balcali Hospital), O. C. Tatar (Kocaeli University Teaching Hospital), S. S. Yurdaor (Cumhuriyet University Faculty of Medicine), S. Mermer (Ankara University Faculty of Medicine), U. Seyhan (Ege University Faculty of Medicine Hospital), V. Tosun (Mustafa Kemal University), Y. Gunaydin (Ondokuz Mayis University Faculty of Medicine), Z. B. Ekinci (Erciyes University health application and research center), Z. Yazkan (Abant Izzet Baysal University Faculty Hospital); *United Kingdom*: J. Choi (St Thomas' Hospital), T. S. L. Yeoh (Glasgow Royal Infirmary), C. S. Jones (Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust), K. Bresges, S. Gallagher (Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital), M. Ngaage (Addenbrooke's Hospital), S. Venturini (Leicester General Hospital), S. K. Kamarajah (University Hospital Birmingham), M. I. Saat (Northern General Hospital), J. Loo (University Hospital of Wales), G. Pike (St George's University Hospitals NHS Trust), S. C. Davies (Royal Victoria Infirmary), M. I. Saat (Doncaster Royal Infirmary), R. Kabariti (Abergavenny), J. Olivier (Royal United Hospital Bath)

EuroSurg-1 Collaborators: *Czech Republic*: M. Hurný, R. Žebrák, A. Macháčová, M. Schulzová, P. Smolák, M. Šíroková, H. Palyzová, J. Jaroš, T. Dušek, B. Šimáčková, M. Bartoš, O. Sotona, M. Pös, D. Karásek (University Hospsital, Hradec Kralové); *Ireland*: P. Higgins, S. Hacking, E. Arora, G. Coughlan, N. Palanivail, S. Quill, A. A. Zhang M. Malak, D. S. Maan, J. Cheema, A. W. J. Goh, A.K. Shamsul Badrin (University College Hospital Galway), F. Guinness, N. Howard James, A. Neary, S. Sebaoui, D. Gilroy, G. Petrov, K. Craven, A. MacDonald, A. Redmond, D. Brennan, D. Roche, M. O'Dwyer (St. James' Hospital, Dublin), P. Collins, S. Edwards, J. Doyle, L. Tiedt, B. Arthurs, L. O'Byrne, A. Kiely, M. Glynn, L. Sproule, A. Heaney, S. Li Hi Shing, W Goh (The Adelaide & Meath Hospital, Dublin), Z. Al-Nasser, A Al-Nasser, JW Teh (Mayo University Hospital); *Italy*: S. Pasquali, A. Simioni, D. De Boni, E. Goldin, E. Ciccioli, E. Vendramin (University of Padova), N. Marchese, M. Bruno (MolINETTE Hospital), A. Vinci, G. Harder, V. Morandi, M. Magnoli, A. Suppa, A. Palmieri, M. Martorana, M. Sette, P. Balagna, C. Cruciani, M. Corte (Policlinico San Matteo), B. Sensi, P. Ciano, G. Bagaglini, M. Montuori, L. Di Benedetto, C. Arcudi, R. Pezzuto, F. Saraceno, F. Milana, M. Franceschilli (Policlinico Tor Vergata), A. Rizzi, G. Sampietro (Ospedale Luigi Sacco), L. Turati, V. Rampulla, F. Bianco (Treviglio Hospital), M. E. Boschetti, F. Ghignone, F. E. Cazzola, S. Bianchini, R. Esposto (Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Sant Orsola Malpighi), L. Riva, M. Riva, M. Cannavò, A. Arrigo, L. Giavarini, E. M. Colombo (Sant'Antonio Abate Hospital, Gallarate), G. Gallo, M. Trompetto, G. Clerico (S. Rita Clinic, Vercelli), M. Catalano, T. Dosa, M. El Mabruk, V. Barone, E. Pallara, M. Pasqualoni, G. Caudullo, G. N. Mastandrea Bonaviri, M. Muro, I. Pistola, L. Verardi, D. Ferrara, S. Gerardi L. M. Remore (Complesso

Integrato Columbus), F. Belia, F. Del Coco, C. Larotonda, E. M. Botrugno, A. Cammarota, L. Di Girolami, V. Laterza, A. Laurino, G. Paolo, P. Santocchi, C. Puccioni, A. Truma, F. R. Giardino, A. Giuffrida, M. Ripa (Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino Gemelli), R. Cautiero, M. Patturelli, A. Capozzolo, L. Selvaggi, G. Pellino, A. Facchiano, L. F. Milazzo, S. K. Papazachariou, V. Pattapola (Università della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli), G. Anania, C. Feo, M. Bellinato, P. Priani, D. Zigiotta, A. Troia, T. Vable, G. Piran, S. Targa, S. Pulpito, F. Tagariello, A. Fasano (Arcispedale Sant'Anna- Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria di Ferrara), D. Anconelli, F. Castiglione, L. Tognolo, G. Lopez, A. Campion, M. Tarantino (Ospedale del Delta- Unità Sanitaria Locale di Ferrara), M. Papandrea, R. Sacco, G. Sammarco (Policlinico Universitario c/o Campus S. Venuta), S. Palmisano, M. Giacca, I. Rocco, G. Bellio, A. Favero (Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste), P. Raimondi, M. R. Pantalone (Ospedale S.S. Annunziata, Chieti), P. De Nardi (Ospedale San Raffaele), N. Chetta, M. Notarnicola, A. Picciariello (Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Consorziale Policlinico di Bari), Z Al-Nasser, J. W. Teh (Mayo University Hospital), L. Licari, Z. Parinisi, S. Fazzotta (Policlinico Paolo Giaccone, Palermo), G. Curletti, M. Ciciliot, L. Reggiani, F. Mariani, P. Aonzo (Ospedale Santa Corona di Pietra Ligure), P. Checcacci, P. Montanelli, F. Guerra, I Skalamera, F. Staderini, S. Grandi, T. Nelli (University of Florence); *Netherlands*: D. V. de Boer, A. E. M. van der Pool, T. L. Janssen (Erasmus MC Rotterdam), S. El-Atmani, V. M. T. van Verschuer, M. Poelman (Franciscus Gasthuis), W. J. Dronkers, L. van Steensel, B. R. Toorenvliet (Ikazia Ziekenhuis), D. A. Fares, L. E. Duinhouwer, M. Vermaas (Ijsselland Ziekenhuis), F. F. J. A. Ter Bruggen, W. Hogendoorn, E. van der Harst (Maasstad Ziekenhuis), V. A. J. I. M. van Rijckevorsel (Admiraal de Ruyter Hospital), A. B. Bayoumy, C. R. Lap, J. A. H. Gooszen, N. Abdulrahman, D. de Roy van Zuidewijn, E. J. de Groof (Amsterdam Medical Centre), J. L. Zijlmans, A. S. H. M. van Dalen (Flevoziekenhuis), K. Bos, G. D. Musters (Tergooi Ziekenhuis), A. S. H. M. van Dalen, R. C. Looijen, J.M. Fliers (Onze Lieve Vrouwe Gasthuis), S. E. Oostendorp (VU Medisch Centrum), C.M. Mosterd, L. Blonk, B.H.C.M. Burger J. Jurgens (Rode Kruis Ziekenhuis), M. E. Ribbink, M. S. Boom (Medisch Centrum Slotervaart), A. M. Boersma, E. Hidding (University Medical Center Groningen), P. A. Schmidt, G. Mensink, S. A. Graus (Treant Zorggroep), M. D. A. Gastel, C. G. H. Veenker (Treant Zorggroep, Bethesda hospital), T. M. Van Heumen, F. J. B. Slieker, W. J. A. Sedee, Y.N. Löwensteyn (Antonius hospital), F. J. Amelung, L. E. V. M. de Guerre (Meander Medical Centre), C. L. M. A. Nota, W. P. M. Van Dijck (University Medical Centre Utrecht), J. W. M. van Wijnbergen, A. Pronk, M. Kip, C. van der Zee, S. Heiloo, S. Muller, B. Verboeket (Diakonessenhuis), T. S. Oudman (Zuwe Hofpoort Hospital), S. Zope, V. Gilissen (Maastricht Universitair Medisch Centrum +), J. Gommers, D. Cremers (Maxima Medisch Centrum), M. Van der Lubbe, M. Smet (Zuyderland), K. ter Weele, M. de Bruin, M. Geerlings, L. ter Horst, N. Kerimova (Radboudumc), N. Pesser, H. Heesakkers (Catharina Hospital), T. de Mees (Viecuri hospital), J. M. de Gooyer, L. Willems (Canisius Wilhelmina hospital), L. Gawria, D. Bonouvrie (Rijnstate Arnhem), J. Harms (Tweesteden hospital), Y. Eggen, E. Hengeveld (Slingeland hospital), H. J. Smeets, R. P. C. Hoffman, F. P. N. Detmers Blom (MCH-Bronovo), D. Van Bruggen (Groene Hart Ziekenhuis), W. H. Steup, G. A. Gooiker, Y. R. Willems, A. C. van der Hoeven (Het HagaZiekenhuis); *Spain*: M. Vallve-Bernal, B. Perez-Gandara, J. L. Perez, E. Caballero Rodriguez, A. Marcos Rodrigo, M. Perez Febles (Hospital Universitario Nuestra Señora de Candelaria), R. Blanco-Colino, G. P. Protti Ruiz, M. Hidalgo Pujol, M. de la Rosa-Estadella, A. Borrellas, P. Alberti Delgado, E. Gil Barrionuevo (Hospital Universitari Vall d'Hebron), A. Sanchez, O. Anabitarte, L. Caballero (Hospital Clínico San Carlos), F. J. Poyato Nuñez, R. Prado Perez, A. Varo Muñoz, F. de la Portilla de Juan (Hospital Universitario Virgen del Rocío), J. Fulgencio Barbarin, G. Elorza Echaniz, L. Mitxelena Elosegui, A. T. Delgado, C. E. Martinez Rios, L. Marti Gelonch (Donostia University Hospital), M. Gonzalez Arribas, I. De Serra Tejada, I. Alberdi San Roman, U. de Andres Olabarria

(Hospital Galdakao-Usansolo), D. Aliseda-Jover, L. Fernández-Domper (Clinica Universidad de Navarra), C. Perez Costoya, H. Perez Arias, D. Fernandez Nieto (Hospital San Agustín), I. Alvarez Reyes, M. Fa Binefa (Hospital del Mar), L. M. Dominguez Rodriguez, M. Becerra Nieves, M. G. Escalona Canal, I. Aldrey (Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Ourense), I. Vazquez-Gonzalez, A. Falcon Cazas, M. Amarelo Garcia (Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Ferrol), M. I. Hernandez Ros, A. A. Gonzalez Ruiz, M. Garcia Garrido, V. Simon Frapolli, J. M. Martinez Diaz, C. De la Torre Conde, K. Rodrigues Silva (Hospital Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca), S. Hernandez Kakauridze, M. C. Lopez Garcia, D. Flores Funes (Hospital General Universitario Morales Meseguer), C. Gómez-López de San Román, M San Martín Bragado, F. J. Tejero Pintor (Hospital Universitario Río Hortega), O. Esteban Sinovas, B. Pando Ruiz, E. Sánchez Estébanez (Hospital Clínico Universitario), E. Roquet Puigneró, S. Pla Seró, F. F. Vela Polanco (Hospital General de Granollers), O. Mirallas Viñas (Hospital Unviersitari General de Catalunya), M. P. Caro Gonzalez, J. L. Bertelli Puche, A. Gonzalez-Martinez, A. Gonzalez-Martinez, M. Sanchez Cambroner, A. Garcia Torres (Hospital General Universitario Ciudad Real), R. Rodriguez Garcia, M. Dominguez Jimenez, M. de Jesus Rodriguez Perdomo (Hospital Universitario de Salamanca), E. Echazarreta-Gallego, S. Laguna Román, L. Sánchez-Blasco, M. del Mar López-Cuevas, I. Latras-Cortés (Hospital Clínico Universitario de Zaragoza), L. López-Vendrell, A. Díaz Padillo, S. Fontanet-Soler (Hospital Universitari Joan XXIII), N. Mestres Petit, J. A. Cruz Reyes (Hospital Universitario Arnau de Vilanova de Lleida), V. Dominguez-Prieto, C. Fernandez, M. Posada (H.U. Fundacion Jimenez Diaz), L. Moratilla Lapeña, E. Martin Morales, P. Mate-Mate, G. Garcia Cruz, L. Gorini, I. Rubio-Perez (H.U. La Paz), C. Soldevila-Verdeguer, C. Jiménez-Viñas, A. Luehrman, F. Sena-Ruiz, J. M. Garcia-Perez, M. Plomer-Sanchez, N. Pujol-Cano, M. Jimenez-Segovia, P. Diaz-Jover, C. Pineño-Flores, D. Ambrona-Zafra, X. F. Gonzalez-Argente, P. Jiménez-Morillas (Hospital Universitario Son Espases), R. López-Mármol, M. Durán-Martínez, F. Alconchel-Gago (Hospital Universitario Reina Sofia de Cordoba), C. Salazar-García, A. González-Crespo (Hospital General Universitario de Alicante), M. Checa Guillen, A. Valderrama Pérez (Hospital La Fe de Valencia), O. Claramonte Bellmunt, R. M. Martí Fernández (Hospital Clínico Universitario de Valencia); *Turkey*: A. E. Gezen, S. Kasap, Z. O. B. B. Soylemez, A. B. Bolat, S. E. Y. I. Aydar, B. Z. Birgin, O. Coskun, S. G. Cakir, Z. O. Belibagli, M. Herken (Hacettepe University Hospital), S. Erdem, S. Kayacan, Y. Kelesoglu, D. Moran, H. Atalay, E. Kucukdiler, Z. S. Demirci, A. Demirci, C. Buyukkasap, A. Kuzey, C. Emral, H. Dogan (Gazi University Medical Faculty), A. Sahin, H. Cok, H. Durmaz, A. Asma, B. Ergul, A. Kaya, G Bilicen (Celal Bayar Universitesi Hafsas Sultan Hastanesi), M. Gunay, E. Senturk, L. Baskoy, H. M. Besisik, K. Topalan, E. Piraliev, A. N. Danalioglu, A. Ilbak, S. Yigman, C. Kara, M. Guzel (Bezmialem Vakif Universtiy's Hospital), B. Yuksek, E. T. Inci, U. Onsal, T. Erel, S. K. Cetin, E. Yekenkurul, P. Kasar, Z. A. Saglam, F. Gursoy, M. Cetinkaya, H. Aktekin, D. N. Bober, Y. S. Mugurtay, G. Koksall (Duzce University School of Medicine), S. Celik, G. Bektur, R. Yildirim, T. Ankarali, H. Güven, A. Yuksel, A. Semiz, S. Cise, K. Tomas, E. Arslan, M. Ulusahin, F. Akbulut, H. Tulum, S. Bodur (Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Medicine), B. B. Ozmen, V. C. Isler, A. M. Pektas, D. Mutlu, M. Mericliler, I. Tansoker, Z. P. Polat, N. Seyrek, S. Beyatli, O. F. Toto, H. C. Cakaloglu, I. Sapci, B. Akpunarli, C. Adiyaman, B. B. Kobal (Acibadem University Atakent Hospital), A. Y. Sen, Z. Gok, S. Benli, M. Turpan, S. Kocapinar, H. Parimli, S. Acar, M. Eger, I. Yilmaz, U. Cengiz, I. Yoruk (Dokuz Eylul University Hospital), B. Mutlu, A. Ulkucu, H.I. Erol, C. Arukan, B. Kara, K. Gokce, B. Caliskan, K. Demirci (Trakya University), T. Elkatroushi, B. Ayaz, E. Ucar, B. Uzun, T. Sivrikaya, B. Goksoy, E. Eroz, B. Celik, B. Canbay Torun, B. Ekin, B. B. Senay (Istanbul School of Mecine), A. I. Tavuz, C. Temiz, M. Yilmaz, C. Yasar, E. Cakir, A. Subasi, K. Celik, K. Aksoy, E. Karabulut, O. Altintas, A. N. Bali, E. Ciftci, H. Babaoglu, A. Aljbour, I. Aljbour (Medipol University Hospital), M. K. Aktas, T. Akcaoglu, E. Kakil, O. Taskin, R. B. Taskin, U.

Topal, E. Huzmeli, T. Caliskan, A. G. Unal (Cukurova University Faculty of Medicine Balcali Hospital), O. C. Tatar, A. M. Yurekli, V. Sari, D. N. Tutam, D. Celen, G. Posteki, B. Demirtas, S. Yildiz, E. Kilic, Y. Yalcin, A. Kurt, Y. Gozubuyuk, S. Huseynova, S. Cinar (Kocaeli University Teaching Hospital), S. S. Yurdaor, S. N. Calar, O. Kurklu, M. Binbuga, C. Ceylan, G. Yavuz, Y. E. Alim, N. Yildirim, S. Yilmaz (Cumhuriyet University Faculty of Medicine), S. Mermer, D. Onar, E. Aray, A. C. Ozsipahi, G. E. Koc, E. Yetiskin, M. D. Kocer, B. Ozgencil, B. Bahcecioglu (Ankara University Faculty of Medicine), U. Seyhan, A. D. Hacioglu, O. Bilici, S. Cin, E. C. Uzunoglu, E. C. Cumen (Ege University Faculty of Medicine Hospital), L. Aslan, B. Erozugur, S. S. Yildiz, T. Zengin (Mustafa Kemal University), Y. Gunaydin, S. Kullac, S. R. Mizan, B. Baykan, O. Kopac, U. Karabacak, A. Aytekin, T. S. Deliktas, Y. Buyukkarabacak, O. Uzun, B. B. Ozkan (Ondokuz Mayıs University Faculty of Medicine), Z. B. Ekinci, B. Karahan, M. Turkmen, A. Akdogan, F. Uctepe, O. Bandirmali, P. Erdogan, F. Demir, G. K. Bozkurt, T. Yilmaz, I. M. I. Sheikh, K. Orhan (Erciyes University health application and research center), Z. Yazkan, B. Balci, M. F. Keyif, S. Bilgin, E. Cantimer, S. Yaman, E. Akkaya, S. N. Atesavci, U. Arslan, M. Asik, S. Koksali, A. Kaya (Abant İzzet Baysal University Faculty Hospital); *United Kingdom*: M. I. Murtaza, S. Mustafa, H. Oun, Z. H. Sam, A. Brogan, C. Y. Kong, R. Zaidi, K. Quinn, F. Taylor, G. Pang (Glasgow Royal Infirmary), C. S. Jones, H. Heath, N. J. Smart, J. Home, D. Mauro, T. M. Noone, J. Fenn, A. Sinha, R. Lowe, I. Hutchings, L. Longstaff, A. G. Smith, J. A. Edwards, B. P. Alcocer, T. Oakley (Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust), M. Thomas-Davies (Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital), G. J. M. Hourston, H. K. N. Kankam, A. Ramana, C. Baker, Y. Endo, C. Wong, R. G. J. Anderson, A. Badran (Addenbrooke's Hospital), A. Ali, L. Myers, F. Tippins, S. Stanley, L. Sandison, E. Schofield, J. Delf, S. Rees, J. Anyan-Brown, K. Long, E. Schofield, M. Archer, V. Anakwenze, F. Tippins, S. Goel, A. Sharma Khatiwada, S. Khan, O. Leafe (Leicester General Hospital), J. Lee, Y. Embury-Young, L. Edwards, P. Hazenberg, M. Agrawal, D. Guerero, F. Britton, M. Rejayee, S. Mahesh, P. H. Khaing, A. Baldwin, S. Iyer, P. Gaskell, A. Adlan, L. Cuckow, B. Barmayehvar (University Hospital Birmingham), T. Rob, C. Ciarleo, S. Mural-Krishnan, N. Jong, S. Carlson, R. Abdelgalil, M. Goble, A. Doshi, O. Ogunleye (Northern General Hospital), L. Marsh, J. Bagley, A. Poacher, J. Cantelo, J. Wylie, S. Govil, F. Hill, D. Beaver, A. Urquhart (University Hospital of Wales), I. Rakhimov, G. Pike, V. Raina, T. Clifford, R. Iorga, E. Cartwright (St George's University Hospitals NHS Trust), S. C. Davies, A. J. Harris (Royal Victoria Infirmary), B. Shurovi, S. Wadanamby E. Brown, C. Bradley, (Doncaster Royal Infirmary), A. Ahmad, S. Jeyabraba (St Thomas' Hospital), B. Hardaman, A. Truss (Royal United Hospital Bath), U. S. Mohamed (Abergavenny)

EuroSurg-1 Consultants: *Czech Republic*: J. Örhalmi (Hradec Králove Faculty Hospital); *Ireland*: M. J. Kerin (University College Hospital Galway), J. Reynolds (St. James' Hospital, Dublin), P. Ridgway (The Adelaide & Meath Hospital, Dublin); *Italy*: S. Pasquali (University of Padova), M. Morino, A. Arezzo (Molinette Hospital), A. Pietrabissa (Policlinico San Matteo), G. Sica (Policlinico Tor Vergata), D. Foschi (Ospedale Luigi Sacco), G. Sgroi (Treviglio Hospital), G. Rosati (Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Sant Orsola Malpighi), A. Benevento (Sant'Antonio Abate Hospital, Gallarate), M. Trompetto (Department of Colorectal Surgery, S. Rita Clinic, Vercelli), C. Coco (Complesso Integrato Columbus), R. Persiani (Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino Gemelli), F. Selvaggi (Università della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli), M. Rubbini, G. Vasquez (Arcispedale Sant'Anna - Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria di Ferrara), F. Messina (Ospedale del Delta- Unità Sanitaria Locale di Ferrara), R. Sacco (Policlinico Universitario c/o Campus S. Venuta), N. De Manzini (Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste), P. Innocenti (Ospedale S.S. Annunziata, Chieti), R. Rosati (Ospedale San Raffaele, Milano), D. F. Altomare (Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Consorziale Policlinico di

Bari), A. Sartori (Ospedale San Valentino di Montebelluna), G. Salamone (Policlinico Paolo Giaccone, Palemo), R. Galleano (Ospedale Santa Corona di Pietra Ligure), F. Cianchi (University of Florence); *Netherlands*: W. A. Bemelman (AMC), B. P. L. Wijnhoven (Erasmus MC Rotterdam), A. W. H. van de Ven (Flevoziekenhuis), R. J. de Vos tot Nederveen Cappel (Admiraal de Ruyter Hospital), S. M. M. de Castro (OLVG), W. J. H. J. Meijerink (VU Medisch Centrum), I. M. Mulder (Rode Kruis Ziekenhuis), Y. I. Z. Acherman (Medisch Centrum Slotervaart), B. L. van Leeuwen (University Medical Center Groningen), R. A. Schasfoort (Treant Zorggroep), F. W. H. Kloppenberg (Treant Zorggroep, Bethesda hospital), R. Wiezer (Antonius hospital), E. C. J. Consten (Meander Medical Centre), W. M. U. Van Grevenstein (University Medical Centre Utrecht), A. Schiphorst (Diakonessenhuis), N. Wijffels (Zuwe Hofpoort Hospital), L.P.S. Stassen (Maastricht Universitair Medisch Centrum), M. Uittenbogaart (Maxima Medisch Centrum), M. Klinkert (Zuyderland), H. de Wilt, M. Koppe (Radboudumc), I. de Hingh (Catharina Hospital), J. Konsten (Viecuri hospital), F. Polat (Canisius Wilhelmina hospital), F. Berends (Rijnstate Arnhem), B. Langenhoff, D. Zimmerman (Tweesteden hospital), T. van Engelenburg (Slingeland hospital), J. J. M. Vries (MCH-Bronovo), C. I. M. Baeten (Groene Hart Ziekenhuis), A. J. N. M. Bastiaansen (Het HagaZiekenhuis), A van Geloven (Tergooi Ziekenhuis), I Khan (Mayo University Hospital); *Spain*: J. Girones (Hospital Universitari Doctor Josep Trueta), M. Barrera Gomez (Hospital Universitario Nuestra Señora de Candelaria), E. Espin-Basany (Hospital Universitari Vall d'Hebron), G. Sanz Ortega (Hospital Clínico San Carlos), V. M. Duran Muñoz-Cruzado (Hospital Universitario Virgen del Rocío), I. Ruiz Montesinos, J. M. Enriquez-Navascues (Donostia University Hospital), V. Portugal Porras (Hospital Galdakao-Usansolo), J. Baixauli (Clinica Universidad de Navarra), L. J. Garcia Florez (Hospital San Agustín), S. Alonso Gonçalves (Hospital del Mar), A. Parajo (Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Ourense), L. Sanchez-Guillen (Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Ferrol), J. A. Lujan Mompean (Hospital Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca), V. Soria Aledo (Hospital General Universitario Morales Meseguer), J. J. Arenal (Hospital Universitario Río Hortega), F. Blanco Antona (Hospital Clínico Universitario), J. M. Badia (Hospital General de Granollers), J. Roura (Hospital Unversitari General de Catalunya), P. Villarejo Campos (Hospital General Universitario Ciudad Real), J. Garcia Garcia (Hospital Universitario de Salamanca), M. Elía-Guedea (Hospital Clínico Universitario de Zaragoza), M. Millan (Hospital Universitari Joan XXIII), J. Viñas-Salas (Hospital Universitario Arnau de Vilanova de Lleida), D. Garcia-Olmo (H.U. Fundacion Jimenez Diaz), M. I. Prieto-Nieto (H.U. La Paz), J. J. Segura-Sampedro (Hospital Universitario Son Espases), F. J. Medina-Fernández (Hospital Universitario Reina Sofia de Cordoba), M. Romero-Simó (Hospital General Universitario de Alicante), M. Frasson (Hospital La Fe de Valencia), A. Espí Macías (Hospital Clínico Universitario de Valencia); *Turkey*: M. B. Tirnaksiz (Hacettepe University Hospital), S. Leventoglu (Gazi University Medical Faculty), E. Kara (Celal Bayar Universitesi Hafsá Sultan Hastanesi), Y. Taşçı (Bezmialem Vakıf Universtiy's Hospital), M. Pehlivan (Duzce University School of Medicine), A. Guner (Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Medicine), V. Ozben (Acibadem University Atakent Hospital), C. Agalar (Dokuz Eylul University Hospital), D. Albayrak (Trakya University), C. Ertekin (Istanbul School of Mecine), M. Oncel (Medipol University Hospital), G. Sakman (Cukurova University Faculty of Medicine Balcali Hospital), S. A. Guler (Kocaeli University Teaching Hospital), A. Kurt (Cumhuriyet University Faculty of Medicine), I. E. Gecim (Ankara University Faculty of Medicine), O. Firat (Ege University Faculty of Medicine Hospital), S. Akkucuk (Mustafa Kemal University), G. S. Ozbalci (Ondokuz Mayıs University Faculty of Medicine), E. M. Sozuer (Erciyes University health application and research center), N. Sengul (Abant İzzet Baysal University Faculty Hospital); *United Kingdom*: A. Schizas (St Thomas' Hospital), P. G. Horgan (Glasgow Royal Infirmary), N. J. Smart (Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust), J.

Hernon (Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital), N. Fearnhead (Addenbrooke's Hospital), B. Singh (Leicester General Hospital), S. Bach (University Hospital Birmingham), A. Harikrishnan (Northern General Hospital), M. Stechman (University Hospital of Wales), J. Hayat (St George's University Hospitals NHS Trust), P. Coyne (Royal Victoria Infirmary), T. Wilson (Doncaster Royal Infirmary), C. Arun (Abergavenny)

EuroSurg-1 Data Validators: *Ireland:* V. Manvydas (University College Hospital Galway); *Italy:* P. Moroni (University of Padova), G. Lo Secco (Molinetto Hospital), F. Argenti (Policlinico San Matteo), F. Romano (Policlinico Tor Vergata), P. Calcagno (Ospedale Luigi Sacco), F. Steccanella (Treviglio Hospital), G. Cisternino (Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Sant Orsola Malpighi), C. Bottini (Sant'Antonio Abate Hospital, Gallarate), A. Realis Luc (S. Rita Clinic, Vercelli), M. Apicella (Complesso Integrato Columbus, Fondazione Policlinico Universitario Agostino Gemelli), G. Candilio (I Università della Campania Luigi Vanvitelli), F. Gubbio (Arcispedale Sant'Anna - Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria di Ferrara), E. De Luca (Policlinico Universitario c/o Campus S. Venuta), B. Casagrande (Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste), A. Decorato (Ospedale S.S. Annunziata, Chieti), F. Aquilino (Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria Consorziale Policlinico di Bari), B. Badii (University of Florence); *Netherlands:* E. J. de Groof (AMC), C. N. S. Rahme (VU Medisch Centrum), E. Kleine (Medisch Centrum Slotervaart), M. Klinkert (Zuyderland), S. Yauw (Radboudumc), I. de Hingh (Catharina Hospital), S. de Zeeuw (Canisius Wilhelmina hospital), E. Aarts (Rijnstate Arnhem), M. Teixeira da Silva (Tweesteden hospital), L. Brueren, G. Bokkerink (Slingeland hospital), T. Schok (Viecuri hospital), M. Graafland (Flevoziekenhuis), J.M. Fliers (OLVG); *Spain:* P. E. Gonzalez de Chaves (Hospital Universitario Nuestra Señora de Candelaria), L. M. Jimenez-Gomez (Hospital Universitario Vall d'Hebron), J. L. García Galocha (Hospital Clínico San Carlos), M. C. Palos Campos (Hospital Universitario Virgen del Rocío), J. M. Enriquez Navascues (Donostia University Hospital), F. Jimenez Escovar (Hospital Galdakao-Usansolo), J. L. Hernandez-Lizoáin (Clinica Universidad de Navarra), L. J. Garcia Florez (Hospital San Agustín), X. Monzonis Hernandez (Hospital del Mar), J. M. Dominguez Sanchez (Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Ourense), E. Vives-Rodriguez (Complejo Hospitalario Universitario de Ferrol), J. Abrisqueta Carrion (Hospital Universitario Virgen de la Arrixaca), J. Beltrán de Heredia (Hospital Clínico Universitario), D. Padilla Valverde (Hospital General Universitario Ciudad Real), J. A. Alcazar Montero (Hospital Universitario de Salamanca), E. Córdoba-Díaz de Laspra (Hospital Clínico Universitario de Zaragoza), M. Franco Chacón (Hospital Universitari Joan XXIII), P. Muriel (Hospital Universitario Arnau de Vilanova de Lleida), P. Pastor-Riquelme (H.U. Fundacion Jimenez Diaz), B. Peinado Iribar (H.U. La Paz), N. Alonso Hernandez (Hospital Universitario Son Espases), D. Costa-Navarro (Hospital General Universitario de Alicante), E. Martínez Chillarón (Hospital Clínico Universitario de Valencia); *Turkey:* E. Secilmis (Hacettepe University Hospital), E. Bamac (Gazi University Medical Faculty), F. Koç (Bezmi Alem Vakıf University Hospital), M. Kayaci Durak (Duzce University School of Medicine), S. Bayram, B. B. Kobal (Acibadem University Atakent Hospital), M. Ekrem (Dokuz Eylul University Hospital), S. Uzun (Trakya University), A. F. K. Gok (Istanbul School of Medicine), F. Gorguner (Ankara University Faculty of Medicine), T. Yildiz (Medipol University Hospital), K. Dalci (Cukurova University Faculty of Medicine Balcali Hospital), C. Kilinc (Kocaeli University Teaching Hospital), M. Koç (Cumhuriyet University Faculty of Medicine), M. A. Yuksek (Ondokuz Mayıs University Faculty of Medicine), T. Ersoy (Erciyes University health application and research center), E. Celik (Abant İzzet Baysal University Faculty Hospital); *United Kingdom:* E. Parmar (Glasgow Royal Infirmary), N. Abuhussein (Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust), P. Metcalf (Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital), M. Atif (University Hospital

Birmingham), E. Heywood (Northern General Hospital), D. Golding (University Hospital of Wales), J. W. Mayes (Royal Victoria Infirmary), M. I. Saat (Doncaster Royal Infirmary), M. F. Bath (Leicester General Hospital)

DISCOVER Steering Committee: D. Nepogodiev, T. M. Drake, S. J. Chapman, J. C. Glasbey, C. Khatri, C. Y. Kong, H. A. Claireaux, M. F. Bath, M. Mohan, L. McNamee, M. Kelly, H. Mitchell, J. E. Fitzgerald, E. M. Harrison, A. Bhangu.

DISCOVER Local Leads: H. A. Claireaux (University of Bristol, Bristol); I. Antoniou (Hull York Medical School, Hull); R. Dean (Leicester Medical School, Leicester); N. Davies (University of East Anglia, Norwich); S. Trecarten, I. Henderson (University of Nottingham, Nottingham); C. Holmes (University of Sheffield, Sheffield); J. Wylie, R. H. Shuttleworth (Queen's University Belfast, Belfast); A. Jindal (University of Limerick, Limerick); F. Hughes, P. Gouda (National University of Ireland, Galway); L. McNamee (Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Dublin); R. Fleck (Trinity College, Dublin); M. Hanrahan (University College Cork, Cork); P. Karunakaran (University College Dublin, Dublin); J. H. Chen, M. C. Sykes (Imperial College, London); R. K. Sethi, S. Suresh (King's College, London); P. Patel, M. Patel (Queen Mary University, London); R. K. Varma, J. Mushtaq (St George's University of London, London); B. Gundogan (University College London, London); W. Bolton (University of Leeds, Leeds); M. Mohan, T. Khan (University of Liverpool, Liverpool); J. Burke, R. Morley (University of Manchester, Manchester); N. Favero (Newcastle University Medical School, Newcastle upon Tyne); R. Adams (University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen); V. Thirumal (University of Dundee, Dundee); E. D. Kennedy (University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh); K. K. Ong, Y. H. Tan (University of Glasgow, Glasgow); J. Gabriel (Brighton and Sussex Medical School, Brighton); A. Bakhsh, J. Y. L. Low (Peninsula, Exeter and Plymouth); A. Yener (Southampton Medical School, Southampton); V. Paraoan (University of Cambridge, Cambridge); R. Preece, T. W. Tilston (Cardiff University, Cardiff); E. Cumber (University of Oxford, Oxford); S. Dean (Swansea University, Swansea); T. Ross, E. McCance (University of Birmingham, Birmingham); H. Amin (Keele University, Keele); L. Satterthwaite (University of Warwick, Coventry).

DISCOVER Collaborators: K. D. Clement, R. Gratton, E. D. Mills, S. M. Chiu, G. Hung, N. M. Rafiq, J. D. B. Hayes, K. L. Robertson, K. Dynes (Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Aberdeen); H. C. Huang, S. Assadullah, J. W. Duncumb, R. D. C. Moon, S. X. Poo, J. K. Mehta, K. R. Joshi, R. Callan, J. M. Norris, N. J. Chilvers, H. Keevil, P. Jull (Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge); S. Mallick, D. Elf, L. Carr (Airedale General Hospital, Steeton); C. Player, E. C. Barton, A. L. Martin, S. G. Ratu, E. J. Roberts, P. N. Phan, A. R. Dyal, J. E. Rogers, A. D. Henson (Alexandra Hospital, Redditch); N. B. Reid, D. Burke, G. Culleton, S. Lynne, D. Burke (Antrim Area Hospital, Antrim); S. Mansoor, C. Brennan, R. Blessed, C. Holloway, A. Hill, T. Goldsmith, S. Mackin (Arrowe Park Hospital, Wirral); S. Kim, E. Woin, G. Brent, J. Coffin, O. Ziff (Barnet Hospital, Barnet); Z. Momoh, R. Debenham, M. Ahmed (Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital, Basingstoke); C. S. Yong, J. C. Wan, H. C. Copley, P. Raut, F. I. Chaudhry (Bedford Hospital, Bedford); R. H. Shuttleworth, G. Nixon, C. Dorman, R. Tan, S. Kanabar, N. Canning, M. Dolaghan, N. Bell, M. McMenamain (Belfast City Hospital, Belfast); A. Chhabra, K. Duke, L. Turner, T. Patel, L. S. Chew, M. Mirza, S. Lunawat, B. Oremule (Blackpool Victoria Hospital, Blackpool); N. Ward, M. Khan (Bolton Royal Hospital, Bolton); E. T. Tan, D. Maclennan, R. J. McGregor, E. G. Chisholm, E. J. Griffin, L. Bell (Borders General Hospital, Melrose); B. A. Hughes, J. Davies, H. Haq, H. Ahmed, N.

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Ungcharoen, C. Whacha, R. Thethi (Bradford Royal Infirmary, Bradford); R. M. Markham, A. H. Y. Lee, E. Batt, N. P. Bullock, C. T. Francescon, J. E. Davies, N. M. Shafiq (Bristol Royal Infirmary, Bristol); J. Zhao, S. Vivekanantham, I. Barai, J. L. Y. Allen, D. C. Marshall, C. J. McIntyre, H. C. P. Wilson, A. J. Ashton, C. Lek (Charing Cross Hospital, London); N. Behar, M. Davis-Hall, N. Seneviratne, S. Kim, L. Esteve, M. Sirakaya, S. Ali, S. Pope, J. S. Ahn, A. Craig-McQuaide (Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, London); W. A. Gatfield, S. Leong, A. M. Demetri, A. L. Kerr (Cheltenham General Hospital, Cheltenham); C. Rees, J. Loveday, S. Liu, M. Wijesekera, D. Maru, M. Attalla, N. Smith (Chester Hospital, Chester); D. Brown, P. Sritharan, A. Shah, V. Charavanamuttu, G. Heppenstall-Harris, K. Ng, T. Raghvani, N. Rajan, K. Hulley (Colchester Hospital, Colchester); N. Moody, M. Williams, A. Cotton (Conquest Hospital, Hastings); M. Sharifpour, K. N. Lwin, M. Bright, A. R. Chitnis, M. Abdelhadi, A. D. Semana (County Hospital, Stafford); F. Morgan, R. Reid, J. Dickson, L. Anderson, R. McMullan, J. Dickson, N. Ahern, A. Asmadi, L. B. Anderson (Craigavon Area Hospital, Craigavon); J. Lua Boon Xuan, L. Crozier, S. McAleer (Daisy Hill Hospital, Newry); D. M. Lees, A. A. Adebayo, M. Das, A. H. Amphlett (Derriford Hospital, Plymouth); A. Al-Robeye, A. Valli, J. Khangura, A. Winarski, A. Ali, J. Khangura (Dewsbury Hospital, Dewsbury); H. Woodward, C. Gouldthrope, M. Turner, K. Sasapu (Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby); M. Tonkins, J. R. L. Wild, M. Robinson, J. Hardie, R. Heminway, R. Narramore, N. Ramjeeawon, A. Hibberd (Doncaster Royal Infirmary, Doncaster); F. Winslow, W. Ho, B. F. Chong, K. Lim, S. Ho (Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary, Dumfries); J. A. Crewdson, S. Singagireson, N. Kalra, F. Koumpa, H. Jhala, W. C. Soon, M. Karia, M. G. Rasiah, D. Xylas (Ealing Hospital, Southall); H. Gilbert, M. Sundar-Singh, J. Wills (Eastbourne District General Hospital, Eastbourne); J. Mushtaq, S. Akhtar, S. Patel, L. Hu, C. Brathwaite-Shirley, H. Nayee, O. Amin, T. Rangan, E. J. H. Turner (East Surrey Hospital, Redhill); C. McCrann, R. Shepherd, N. Patel, J. Prest-Smith, E. Auyoung, A. Murtaza, A. Coates (Epsom Hospital, Epsom); O. Prys-Jones, M. King, S. Gaffney, C. J. Dewdney, I. Nehikhare, J. Lavery (Forth Valley Royal Hospital, Larbert); J. Bassett, K. Davies, K. Ahmad, A. Collins, M. Acres, C. Egerton, T. Khan (Furness General Hospital, Barrow-in-Furness); K. Cheng, X. Chen, N. Chan, A. Sheldon, S. Khan, J. Empey, E. Ingram, A. Malik, M. Johnstone (Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow); R. Goodier, J. P. Shah, J. E. Giles, J. A. Sanders, S. W. McLure, S. Pal, A. Rangedara, A. N. Baker, C. A. Asbjornsen (George Eliot Hospital, Nuneaton); C. Girling, L. Gray, L. Gauntlett, C. Joyner, S. Qureshi, S. Dean (Glangwili General Hospital, Carmarthen); Y. P. Mogan, J. C. K. Ng, A. N. Kumar, J. H. Park, D. Tan, K. P. Choo, K. P. Raman, P. Buakuma, C. Xiao, S. Govinden (Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Glasgow); O. D. Thompson, M. A. Charalambos, E. Brown, R. B. Karsan, T. Dogra, L. M. Bullman, P. M. Dawson (Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Gloucester); A. L. Frank, H. Abid, L. Tung, U. Qureshi, A. Tahmina, B. W. Matthews (Good Hope Hospital, Sutton Coldfield); R. T. Harris, A. O'Connor, K. Mazan, S. Iqbal, S. A. Stanger, J. D. Thompson (Great Western Hospital, Swindon); J. A. L. Sullivan, E. Uppal, A. MacAskill, F. A. Bamgbose, C. Neophytou, A. F. Carroll, C. W. Rookes, U. Datta, A. J. Dhutia (Hammersmith Hospital, Hammersmith); S. Rashid, N. Ahmed, T. Lo (Harrogate District Hospital, Harrogate); S. Bhanderi, C. D. Blore, S. Ahmed, H. Shaheen, S. Abburu, S. Majid, Z. Abbas, S. S. Talukdar, S. Ahmed (Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham); L. J. Burney, J. B. Patel, O. Al-Obaedi, A. W. Roberts, O. Al-Obaedi, S. Mahboob (Hereford County Hospital, Hereford); B. Singh, S. Sheth, P. Karia, A. Prabhudesai, K. Kow, K. Koysombat, S. Wang, P. Morrison, Y. Maheswaran, P. Keane (Hillingdon Hospital, Uxbridge); P. C. Copley, O. Brewster, G. X. Xu, P. Harries, C. Wall (Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Huntingdon); A. Al-Mousawi, S. Bonsu, P. Cunha, T. Ward, J. Paul, K. Nadanakumaran, S. Tayeh, T. Ward, H. Holyoak, J. Remedios, K. Theodoropoulou, T. Ward (Homerton University Hospital, London); A. Luhishi, L. Jacob, F. Long, A. Atayi, S. Sarwar, O. Parker (Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, Huddersfield); J. Harvey, H. Ross, R. Rampal, G. Thomas, P.

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