

Metabolic Surgery Workshop features Professor Francesco Rubino

The third Metabolic Surgery Workshop, being held in Johannesburg 1-2 February 2013, features Professor Francesco Rubino, associate professor of surgery, Weill Cornell Medical College, US, as the keynote speaker.

Described as a world-renowned pioneer of surgery for type 2 diabetes and the 'father' of modern metabolic surgery, he will discuss 'Mechanisms of diabetes resolution in metabolic surgery'. He will also chair a live surgical session during the workshop. Surgery for type 2 diabetes is an emerging speciality, which holds great promise for diabetics, as it can bring the condition into long-term remission for the first time.

The workshop will cover a range of fundamental issues around obesity and metabolic surgery and include presentations by some of the world's foremost experts. Participants will also be able to see a live demonstration of bariatric surgery at the Netcare Waterfall City Hospital.

Dr André Potgieter, a specialist surgeon who practices at the Netcare N1 City Hospital in Cape Town, is to speak on 'Metabolic surgery in South Africa: should we, and can we expand?' while Dr Danie Fölscher, a specialist surgeon from George in the Cape, will discuss whether there is a place for sleeve gastrectomy in metabolic surgery.

Other aspects of metabolic surgery to come under the spotlight include the psychological and dietary issues. Psychologist, David Gonçalves will speak on the 'Lessons learnt from patient psychological profiling' and dieticians, Renata Wilson and Nicola Drabble, will be discussing the 'Pitfalls with the preparation of the diabetic patient' and 'How to maintain a sufficient protein intake' respectively.

Obesity grows as South African health problem

Professor Tess van der Merwe, internationally acknowledged obesity expert and the director of the Centres of Excellence for Metabolic Medicine and Surgery (CEMMS) of South Africa, says healthcare professionals involved in this field should not miss the opportunity. The workshop will take forward the general understanding of metabolic conditions and bariatric surgery, which is increasingly becoming the treatment of choice for many morbidly obese patients. It will be of interest to all medical professionals in the field including specialists, GPs, dieticians and psychologists.

Prof van der Merwe cautions that diseases associated with obesity, such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension and ischaemic heart disease (IHD), are becoming increasingly prevalent in South Africa. This is posing a serious challenge to both government and the private health sector and needs to be urgently addressed. Locally, obesity has reached alarming proportions and is having a grave impact on the health and well-being of South Africans across the board, with as many as 10% of men and 28% of women classified as morbidly obese.

For morbidly obese persons suffering from metabolic comorbid diseases, metabolic surgery, or bariatric surgery as it is commonly known, offers a very high rate of resolution.

Surgical workshop

The workshop forms part of a CEMMS initiative to ensure that metabolic surgery is performed only by experienced and accredited surgeons in a clinical setting with adequate support for all aspects of pre- and post-operative care. CEMMS also aims to make bariatric surgery accessible to those patients who show a favourable risk-benefit ratio. The surgery is the only proven method of achieving long-term weight control for the morbidly obese.

Specialist surgeons, Dr Alan Cairns and Dr Gary Fetter, who in partnership with Prof Van der Merwe have completed well over 800 bariatric surgery procedures and 100 bilio-pancreatic diversion (BPD) procedures, will undertake the live surgical session. They will conduct a Roux-en Y gastric bypass surgery with the help of anaesthetist, Dr Heidi Lombard. Roux-en Y gastric bypass surgery is the most commonly performed bariatric procedure, used in some 80% of cases. Dr Fetter will also perform a BPD and duodenal switch with surgeon, Dr Sudha Naidoo and anaesthetist, Dr Adrian Webb. This procedure has been shown to be highly successful in resolving type 2 diabetes.

"The workshop presentations and live surgery education sessions will provide participants with information on the very latest developments in the field and allow a healthy exchange of ideas," concludes Prof van der Merwe. "Those interested in obesity and metabolic surgery should be sure to put this important CEMMS event into their diaries."

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