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Weight loss surgery medical tourism forecast to grow, reports Medical Travel Quality Alliance

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August 27, 2012 – Scottsdale and Bangkok – Demand for bariatric surgery medical tourism will continue to grow despite governments and insurance companies generally approving more weight loss surgeries at home, according to the Medical Travel Quality Alliance (MTQUA).

“Results don’t last, so some people now are having a second and even a third weight loss operation,” says Julie Munro, president of MTQUA. “Some of them choose to go abroad for another surgery or more likely, they may have to go abroad to get it because their doctor or insurance company refuses to approve it.”

Evidence is growing that weight loss surgery is not a permanent solution to keeping weight off. In Brazil, more than half of patients gained back their lost weight within two years. In Germany, 30 per cent regained their lost weight in as few as 18 months. In Holland and the UK, researchers have found similar results.

Doctors and insurers refuse most of those who request a second or third operation. They claim patients are individually responsible for weight gain after bariatric surgery, though it is now understood that maintaining weight loss for an extended period of time can be very difficult even for those who follow a rigorous exercise routine and disciplined eating habits.

Doctors also point to greater risk of complications and death in a second weight loss surgery.

Instead of fighting the medical establishment, patients are turning to, and in some cases returning to, bariatric surgeons who specialize in treating medical tourists. Today, a medical traveler can get bariatric surgery for about US\$8,000 to \$10,000 whether choosing to travel to Mexico, Korea or Turkey, according to MTQUA.

Weight loss surgery has become a staple of medical travel because of competitive international pricing, no waiting, and looser criteria for qualifying for the surgery. Laparoscopic gastric sleeve surgery is now a popular choice, as is gastric banding. Roux-en-Y, the gold standard of bariatric surgery, is a more complicated surgical procedure that many medical travelers choose not to have.

It is hard to predict why patients regain weight. Physiological and psychological factors affecting long term weight loss include willpower, the new smaller stomach stretching, food addiction, depression and related emotional issues.

Read the full article <http://www.mtqua.org/2012/07/22/bariatric-surgery-medical-travel/>

About Medical Travel Quality Alliance: MTQUA (<http://mtqua.org>) is an international independent organization founded in 2009 to promote safety and quality in treatment and care for medical tourists, medical tourism certification, best practices and World’s Best Hospitals for Medical Tourists™. Its new *Best Practices In Medical Tourism* publication is **What Is Medical Tourism?** <http://www.mtqua.org/files/Medical-Travel-Quality-MTQUA-What-is-medical-tourism-120820.pdf>

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