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Background: The progressive growth of the older patients with obesity represents a challenge to the weight management teams. Although initially, old age was a relative contraindication to the surgical option, current advances in laparoscopic techniques and perioperative optimization protocols have changed the old notion. However, the performance of bariatric procedures in the older patients during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic carries a potential risk. This study aimed to assess the safety of bariatric surgery (BS) in older patients during the pandemic.

Methods: We conducted a prospective international study of patients who underwent BS between 1/05/2020 and 31/10/2020. Patients were divided into two groups - older patients ≥ 65 -year-old (Group I) and young < 65 -year-old (Group II). Two groups were compared for 30-day morbidity and mortality.

Results: We included 7084 patients, the mean age was 40.35 ± 11.9 years, and 5197 (73.4%) were females. The mean preoperative weight and BMI were 119.49 ± 24.4 Kgs and 43.03 ± 6.9 Kg/m², respectively.

The overall comorbidities were significantly higher in Group I, $p = < 0.001$. In Group II, 14.8% were current smokers, compared to 7.4% of Group I. The complications in Group I were significantly higher (11.4%) compared to Group II (6.6%), $p = 0.022$. However, the mortality rate and COVID-19 infection within 30 days were not significantly different between the two groups.

Conclusions: Bariatric surgery during the COVID-19 pandemic in the older patients (≥ 65 years old) is associated with a higher complication rate than the younger age group. However, the mortality and postoperative COVID-19 infection rates are comparable to the younger age group.

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SP2.1.1 Safety of Bariatric Surgery in The Older Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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