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Pre-Operative Risk of Medical Complications Varies by Health Insurance Carrier in Moderately Obese Women: Medicaid v Medicare v Private v Self-Pay

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Background: Greater than 40% of American women are obese. Every surgical practice must manage these medically challenging patients. Clinical variation by health insurance status in mixed sex bariatric surgery populations was reported. However, investigating moderately obese female surgical patients by insurance status is unknown.

Methods: Pre-operative data on 53,292 female patients from the Surgical Review Corporation’s BOLD database about to undergo adjustable gastric banding procedures was examined.

Conclusions: There is significant discordance in the pre-operative clinical characteristics of moderately obese women who stratified by insurance status. Asthma, abdominal-hepatobiliary conditions, and psychological/behavioral issues predominate among Medicaid females. Medicare insured obese women suffer most from cardiopulmonary illnesses, diabetes and dyslipidemia, cholelithiasis, and somatic disabilities. Females with private insurance consume the most alcohol, smoke the least, have the lowest rates of depression, and have no increased incidence of serious weight related medical problems. Self-Pay obese patients appear to be the healthiest insurance group. Mechanisms underlying these findings are not clear. This advance knowledge should be considered in surgery on women with moderate obesity.