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Flexible, Computer Assisted Stapling Device
Literally *TELLS* Weight Loss Surgeons How
To Reduce the Risk of Errors During Gastric Bypass Surgery

New York, NY (March 21, 2007) Weight loss procedures for treating morbid obesity have evolved over the last ten years which has decreased the overall complication rate. However, technical complications such as leakage and bleeding still occur. Since these complications can be fatal, weight loss surgeons are constantly looking for new equipment and surgical techniques to reduce the likelihood of problems. **At Beth Israel Medical Center in Manhattan, attending bariatric surgeon Elliot Goodman, M.D., is now using a computer-mediated stapling device that has many advantages, including the ability to detect tissue thickness and tell him when and what size staples to fire, all of which are helping to reduce the likelihood of complications.**

Traditionally, during the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass procedure a small stomach pouch is created and surgically attached to a nearby segment of the small intestine. Most surgeons use a hand-held surgical stapler to connect the two. Although a stapler is less technically demanding and less time-consuming than hand-sewn sutures, the surgeon is unable to accurately measure tissue thickness or determine how much pressure is being put on the tissue. These unknowns lead to a stapler misfire rate of approximately two percent. The tissue trauma that results can cause stricture (scarring and narrowing of the passage from the intestine to the stomach pouch) and an improperly closed anastomosis (the surgical connection between the pouch and small intestine) may bleed or leak waste into the stomach cavity.

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To reduce the likelihood of complications, Dr. Goodman is using the SurgiASSIST™, a computer-mediated stapling system, in the operating room at Beth Israel. “The traditional hand-held staplers require two hands to operate,” says Dr. Goodman. “The SurgiASSIST staplers are attached to a flexible shaft that allows me to get into small nooks and crannies that were previously difficult to access.” The SurgiASSIST system also allows the surgeon to change the “head” of the stapling device whereas traditionally, an entirely different stapler was needed for each type of staple. Those aren’t the only advantages of the new surgical platform. A small study conducted by Dr. Goodman and his team found that the SurgiASSIST system creates an anastomosis between the stomach and small intestine as quickly as the traditional method with lower intra-and-post-operative leak rates and a lower stricture rate.

About the SurgiASSIST System: This platform combines computer-mediated technology with minimally invasive surgical techniques, creating a tool with numerous benefits. The system includes a Power Console, FlexShaft, Digital Loading Units, a mobile cart and a remote control unit.

- **Power Console:** The Power Console houses the “brain”, or main microprocessor and motor drive units, of the SurgASSIST™ platform, which mediates all functions of the FlexShaft and Digital Loading Units® (DLUs). The Power Console informs the surgeon of all actions by providing both voice and text messages at all critical points during the procedure. Electronic communication between the Power Console and the DLU recognizes the type of DLU being used and reports on its condition and state of readiness. The Power Console allows the SurgiASSIST to digitally sense tissue compression levels and digitally select staple heights. It also prompts the surgeon via LCD and voice message and recognizes and controls the electronic DLUs.
- **FlexShaft:** The 2.13-meter-long FlexShaft enables communication between the main microprocessor in the Power Console and the memory device controlled within the Digital Loading Units. The surgical end of the FlexShaft has a unique, patented design that permits the tilting or “steering” of the distal end through a remote control unit. This design allows surgeons not only to access difficult-to-reach anatomical areas, but also to orient and change the position of the DLU that is attached to the FlexShaft.

- **Digital Loading Units®:** Controlled remotely by the surgeon, Digital Loading Units® (DLUs) represent the "surgical action" of the SurgASSIST™ System and make it possible to perform critical surgical functions less invasively—and with a new level of precision, speed, and staple formation. These computer-mediated devices, which connect to the FlexShaft and transect and staple tissue, eliminate all movements of a rigid device at the anastomotic site—an important advantage over traditional stapling and cutting mechanisms. DLUs are available in a variety of sizes and designs, including circular, right angle linear, and straight linear configurations. Each contains a programmed electronic device that identifies the exact DLU configuration to the Power Console and triggers the activation of the appropriate digital program in the main microprocessor.

If you would like to see the surgASSIST in action and interview Dr. Goodman about his use of this unique new system, please contact Elizabeth Dowling in the public affairs office at: 212-523-4047.

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