Is fourteen the new forty?

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More overweight and obese Australian children are having their gall bladders removed according to a new study.

Canberra Hospital Resident Dr Douglas Greer said the changing profile of paediatric cholecystectomy is an aspect of the ‘obesity epidemic’ that is often overlooked.

“The review analysed patients undergoing cholecystectomy between 1992 and 2016 who were 18 years of age or younger,” Dr Greer said.

“Patient demographics including age, gender, weight, height, and percentiles were reviewed. Comorbidities including indication for surgery, whether elective or emergent, and the procedure performed were also noted.

“The study found the heaviest two per cent of the obese childhood population accounted for 40 per cent of the childhood population who had their gall bladders removed in the past five years.

“Increasingly it’s overweight and obese, particularly female, teenagers who undergo a cholecystectomy after presenting with symptoms you historically see in a forty-year-old.

“Removing the gall balder is a feature of Australia’s childhood obesity crisis that often goes unnoticed.”

Dr Greer said clinicians involved in the diagnosis and management of overweight and obese children must be aware paediatric cholecystectomy and its implications.

In conjunction with Dr Sean Heywood, Associate Professor David Croaker, and Associate Professor Sivakumaran Gananadha, Dr Greer will present their research at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeon’s 87th Annual Scientific Congress which is being held in Sydney between 7-11 May. The congress brings together some of the top surgical and medical minds from across New Zealand, Australia, and the rest of the world.

For more information about the Annual Scientific Congress please visit: https://asc.surgeons.org/

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