

# To be or not to be pregnant within 24 months after Bariatric Surgery ! Does it affect weight loss ?

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## BACKGROUND

Morbid obesity is on the rise worldwide especially in women of reproductive age group. Bariatric surgery is effective in treating obesity and is becoming popular. Pregnancy following these procedures has proven to be safe. However the current recommendation is to delay pregnancy for 12-18 months during the rapid weight loss phase and until the weight loss stabilises<sup>1</sup>.

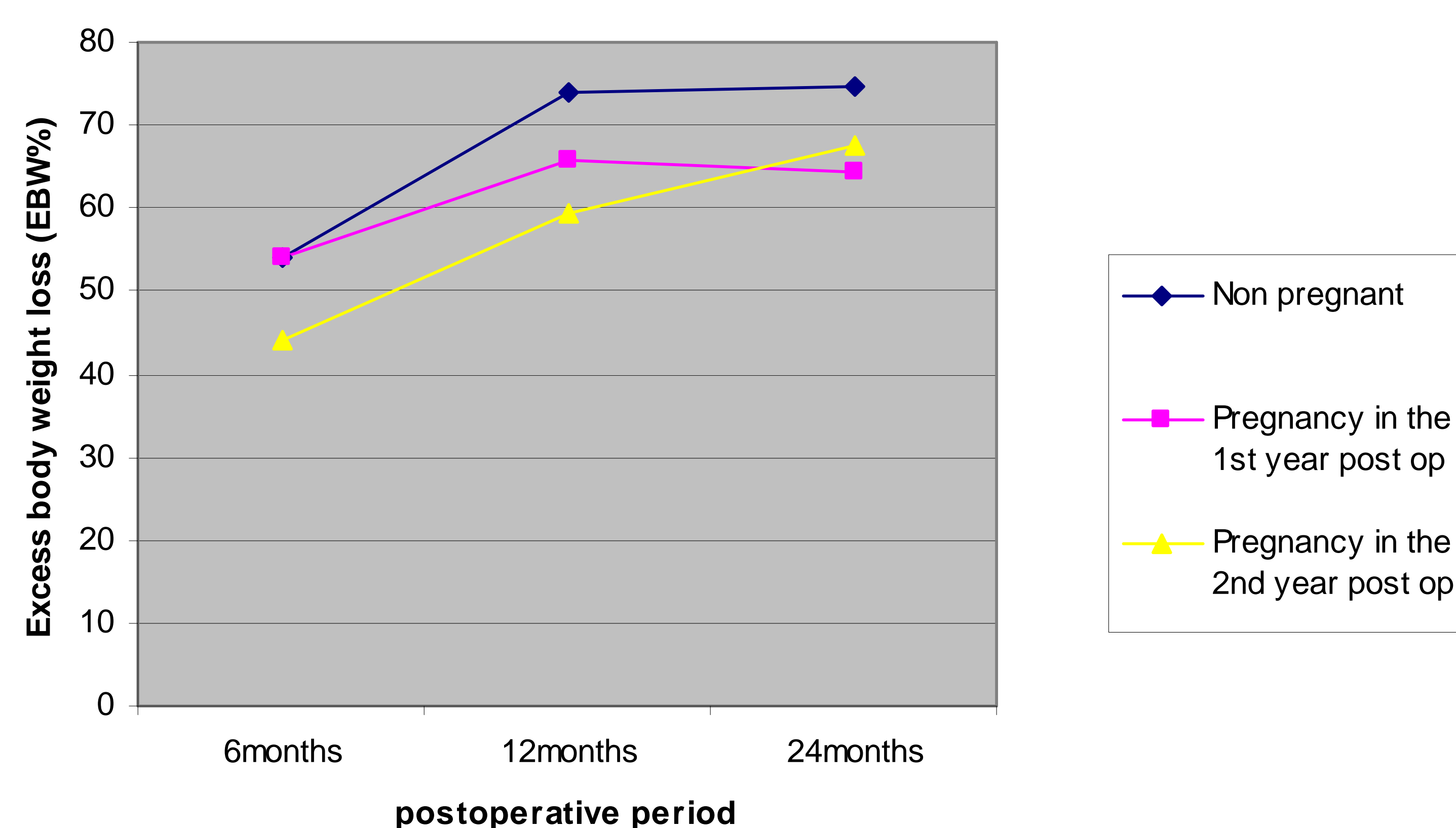
To our knowledge there are no controlled studies that have examined the effects of pregnancy on weight loss in patients who have undergone bariatric surgery. There is no evidence to suggest that pregnancy during the first two postoperative years is unsafe or may have adverse effect on weight loss<sup>2,3</sup>.

The aim of our study was to evaluate weight loss after bariatric surgery in women who became pregnant prior to the recommended 12-18 months.

## METHODS

This study was conducted at Whittington Hospital, a tertiary referral centre for bariatric surgery. We followed up patients who became pregnant following Roux-en-Y gastric bypass upto 24 months following surgery. Data such as age, preoperative weight, body mass index, post operative weight loss, time and weight at conception was prospectively recorded in patients notes.

Weight loss in 3 groups of women after bariatric surgery



## RESULTS

There were 20 pregnancies in 18 women from July 2007 till November 2010. Nineteen had full term deliveries and one miscarried. Ten pregnancies occurred in the first year after surgery and 7 in the second year. Three pregnancies that occurred 2 years after surgery were excluded.

The weight loss was compared with a cohort of age-matched 20 non-pregnant (NP) patients within the same period. The NP patients had an average Excess Body Weight (EBW) loss of 54.1% at 6 months, 73.8% at 12 months and 74.7% at 24 months after surgery. The patients who conceived in the first year after surgery had an excess body weight (EBW) loss of 54.2% at 6 months, 65.9% at 12 months and 64.4% at 24 months after surgery. The patients that conceived between 12-24 months had an average Excess Body Weight (EBW) loss of 44.2% at 6 months, 59.4% at 12 months and 67.5% at 24 months.

ANOVA statistical analysis method found no significant difference in the weight loss outcomes in the various time periods between the pregnant and NP women. All patients achieved the expected weight loss in the first two years irrespective of the pregnancy.

## CONCLUSION

There was no statistically significant difference in weight loss in patients who became pregnant in the first or second year following bariatric surgery compared to the NP women. However, it may be prudent to continue with the current recommendation to delay pregnancy for at least 12-18 months post-operatively, until further evidence is available. We have highlighted this issue where more research is clearly needed.

## REFERENCES

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