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# Palm Springs Life®

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WHERE HER CAREER IS LEADING HER NOW



# Lite Life Surgery

## Bobby Bhasker-Rao, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.A.S.M.B.S.

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF SUPERIOR WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY OUTCOMES

By June Allan Corrigan

### IT'S A NOTEWORTHY YEAR FOR DR. BOBBY

Bhasker-Rao. He's marking his 10th year of practice in Palm Springs, which is certainly reason enough to take pride. He's performed well over 2,500 successful surgeries. Yet Dr. Bobby, as his patients affectionately call him, prefers to focus on a statistic he considers the most important — his continuing zero-mortality rate. "A decade of superior outcomes, a decade of zero-mortality — now that's something to celebrate," he says.

Never one to rest on his laurels, Dr. Bobby remains a progressive figure in the field of weight loss surgery. For a long time, he achieved successful outcomes for his patients using a minimally invasive laparoscopic approach. When robotics emerged, he was quick to incorporate them into his practice to refine his vision. Utilizing the da Vinci robotic surgical system, Dr. Bobby performs gastric bypasses — considered the gold standard in the profession — as well as sleeve gastrectomies, Lap-Band surgeries, and revisional procedures. Presently he's on the cusp of introducing yet another method of weight loss surgery — the duodenal switch procedure.

Intended primarily for patients with a body mass index (BMI) of 50 or more, the duodenal switch is a modified version of a past procedure whereby a significant portion of the intestines are bypassed. However, in this reincarnation, fewer nutritional deficiencies result. "The duodenal switch could very well become the standard for diabetes care, because you often see a better resolution of Type 2 diabetes with it ... and definitely more weight loss," says Dr. Bobby. He will perform it robotically.

Dr. Bobby belongs to a small cadre of surgeons — only 30 or so nationwide — who perform weight loss procedures robotically. He has the distinction of being the highest-volume and most experienced robotic bariatric surgeon on the West Coast. As a result, he's in great demand to proctor and train surgeons around the U.S.

"There's a consensus that robotic surgery is ergonomically favorable to the surgeon and, of course, a less tired doctor is a more effective one," Dr. Bobby says. But it's the three-dimensional imagery the robot provides and the 360-degree



"Dr. Bobby" Bhasker-Rao

wrist rotation it allows that has the greatest impact on patients. "We can see more, we can do more, and we can do it better — because the operation is far more precise," he adds.

### WIDE-RANGING RECOGNITION

Passion and skill of this caliber does not go unnoticed. This year Dr. Bobby has again been named one of the "Top Surgeons in the Nation" as noted in *The New York Times*. He received the

Best of 2014 Palm Springs Physician award. He's also on the 2014 list of Top Doctors revealed in an independent survey of the Greater Palm Springs area. In recent years, the Patient Choice and America's Most Compassionate Doctor awards have come his way. He's been nationally recognized as Best of the Best among Bariatric Surgeons.

You could say heartfelt comments from patients like Jesse Martinez put a human face on all this recognition. Martinez means it when he says,

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*"I'm doing things now I thought I'd never do in my life. To me, Dr. Bobby is part of my family. I know he'll always be there for support"*



Natalie Lopez MA, Ashley Miranda MA, Yolanda Garcia MA, Annie Mohamed RD, Bobby Bhasker-Rao MD, FACS, FASMBS

"Dr. Bobby saved my life. If it wasn't for him, I don't know where I'd be." The 36-year-old Coachella resident weighed an astounding 485 pounds just two years ago. Under Dr. Bobby's care, he lost a total of 270 pounds, shed a number of health problems including Type 2 diabetes, and gained a new lease on life.

It's been three years since Dr. Bobby performed a gastric bypass on Alice Waltermire of Pioneertown. The high desert resident remains humbled by the results, having seen her high blood pressure disappear and her weight drop from 285 pounds to the 140 she has since steadily maintained. "I'm doing things now I thought I'd never do in my life. To me, Dr. Bobby is part of my family. I know he'll always be there for support," she says.

#### A GREAT TEAM LOOKS AHEAD

No man is an island and Dr. Bobby credits his great staff at Lite Life Surgery for helping patients achieve the dramatic and life-altering results they do. He relies on the expertise of Annie Mohamed,

R.D., for example, the on-staff registered dietician who customizes complete nutrition, exercise, and behavioral modification plans for each patient to keep them on track now and down the road. Staff at the practice always stress that no matter what procedure patients ultimately undergo, what they are actually being given is a tool — a tool to achieve and sustain dramatic weight loss. Pre- and post-surgical care along with counseling help sharpen that tool.

Robotic surgery itself will undergo a paradigm shift in the near future when a new robot with even greater capabilities arrives on the scene. Naturally, Dr. Bobby eagerly awaits its unveiling. The improved version of this huge instrument will have a new ease of configuration, making it simple for surgeons to work on different quadrants of the abdomen without time-consuming stops and starts.

Single-site bariatric surgery, wherein weight loss procedures will be accomplished through one small incision, is on the horizon and you can be sure Dr. Bobby will be on board for that as well.

In the meantime, he plans to remain on the zero-mortality path he's forged, embracing

innovation as it comes along. "People often have a lot of apprehension when it comes to bariatric surgery, but they should know that in the right hands they can have a safe operation with a successful outcome. It all hinges on surgeon choice, because there really is no excuse for major complications and mortalities," he says.

*Voted Top Doctor in  
Palm Springs Life  
Magazine two years in a row.*



2013



2014