

# Online search trends related to bariatric surgery and its relationship with utilization in Australia

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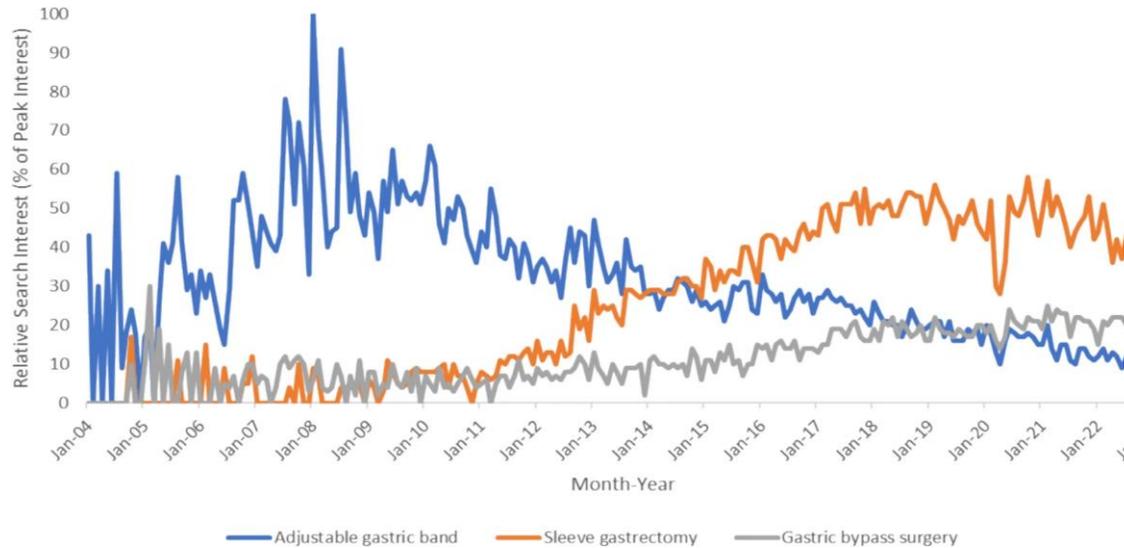
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# Aim & Methodology

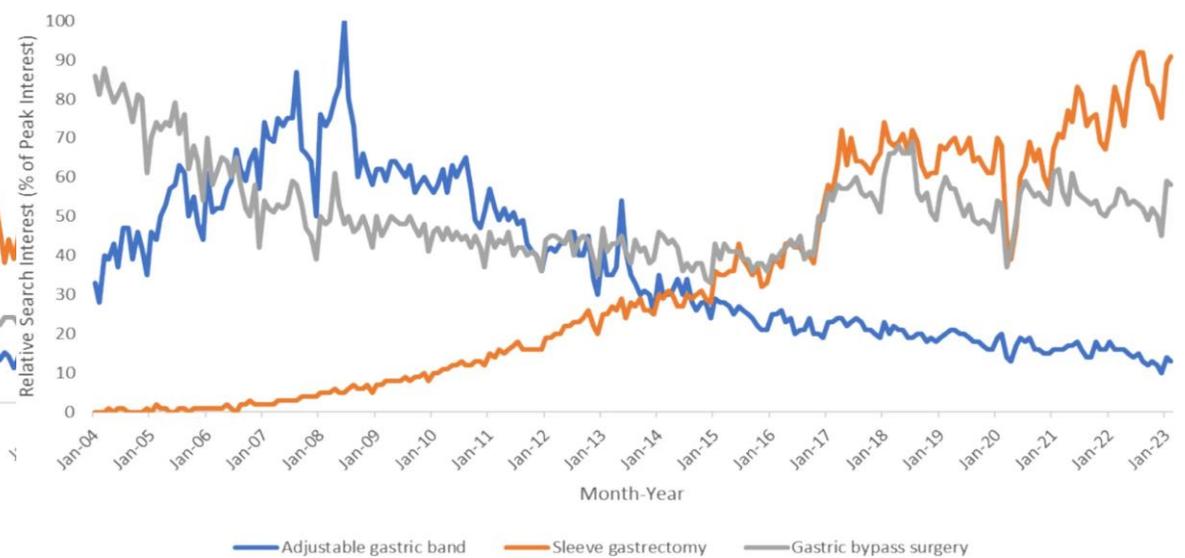
- Determine online search trends in bariatric surgery over time in Australia and worldwide.
- Investigate the relationship between public online search activity and the types of bariatric surgeries performed in Australia.
- Google Search Trends: Analysed search volumes for terms “**adjustable gastric band**”, “**sleeve gastrectomy**”, and “**gastric bypass surgery**” in Australia and worldwide.
- Compared search trends with the number of corresponding surgeries performed in Australia (data from Medicare Benefit Schedule item numbers) from July 2013 to February 2023.

# Results

- Figure 1 (Australia Trends, 2004-2023):



- Figure 2 (Worldwide Trends, 2004-2023):



**Gastric Banding:** peaked in January 2008

**Sleeve Gastrectomy:** Gradual increase overtime; surpassed gastric banding in January 2014; consistently higher from August 2014.

**Gastric Bypass:** Overtook gastric banding in February 2020; lower than sleeve gastrectomy post- October 2011.

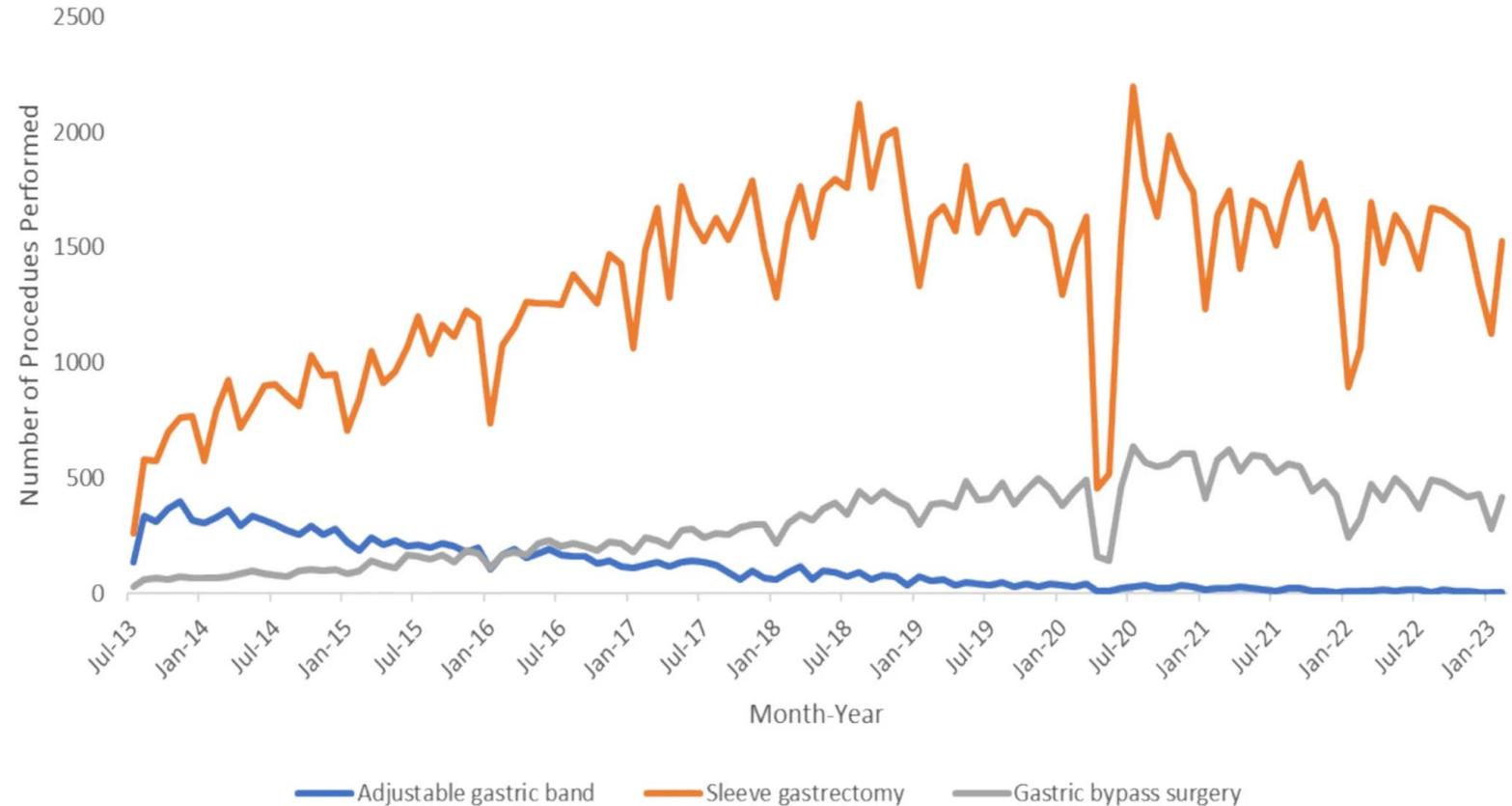
**Gastric Banding:** Initially more popular worldwide; experienced decline, with sleeve gastrectomy overtaking it in June 2015.

**Sleeve Gastrectomy:** Overtook gastric bypass in June 2015; Consistently higher from December 2016.

# Results

- **Sleeve Gastrectomy:** Higher than banding and bypass from July 2013
- **Gastric Banding vs. Bypass:** Bypass surgeries surpassed banding in November 2015 and remained higher after April 2016.

Figure 3 (Australia Surgeries, 2013-2023):



# Conclusion

- The internet is a key information source for patients considering bariatric surgery.
- There is a lag time before online search trends reflect actual surgical activity in Australia.
- Online search trends for banding and sleeve gastrectomy are similar between Australia and worldwide; however, trends for gastric bypass differ. Bypass surgeries surpassed banding in November 2015 and remained higher after April 2016.
- Caution is needed as online information might influence patients towards surgeries not in their best interest.

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