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New anti-obesity device on trial in Italy



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ROME (AFP) - Surgeons in Italy have started testing a novel way to combat the growing scourge of obesity -- a device implanted into patients that gives them the sensation of feeling full.



AFP/File Photo

The device, which weighs 55 grammes and is modelled on the cardiac pacemaker, is to be tested on 350 patients in Italy with the aim of obtaining authorisation for its use in the United States, where obesity has become a major health problem.

One of the surgeons behind the test, Franco Favretti, said on Tuesday that 35 people were already using the device, which stimulates the feeling of satiety though an electrode stuck to the wall of the stomach.

"What's special about this new test is that eight to nine other US hospitals are involved in the aim of obtaining the green light from the US Food and Drug Administration ([news - web sites](#))," he added.

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The participants in the trial do not have to pay anything towards the cost of the device, despite its high price tag, around 12,000 euros (14,400 dollars).

Favretti said that for patients who weigh 40 kilos more than their ideal weight then "there are no other solutions than an operation".

Patients wearing the device, which takes only an hour to implant, can carry on a normal life but are told to avoid bending down, lifting heavy objects or taking part in intense physical activities that have not been authorised by the doctor.

Over 60 percent of Americans are either overweight or suffer from morbid obesity -- commonly defined as being roughly 45 kilograms (100 pounds) above normal body weight for a person of average height.

Obesity-related type-2 diabetes has become a global scourge, fueled in large part by the rise of sedentary lifestyles, high-fat convenience diets and round-the-clock snacking.

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