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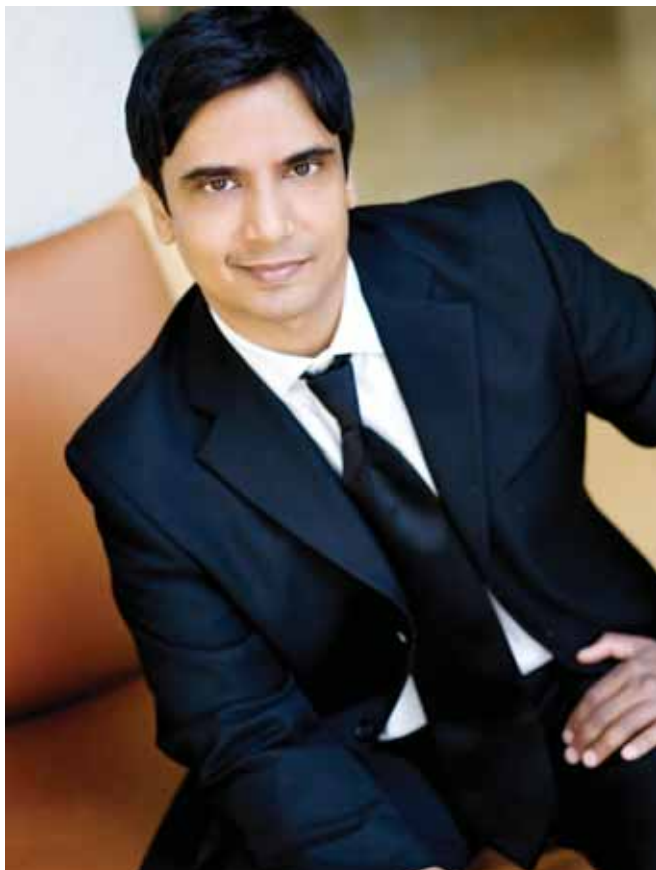
JULY 2013

# Lite Life Surgery

## Bobby Bhasker-Rao, MD, FACS, FASMBS

*First in Southern California to Offer Cutting-Edge Robotic Laparoscopic Weight Loss Surgery*

By June Allen Corrigan



"Dr. Bobby" Bhasker-Rao

### MEDICINE NEVER STANDS STILL.

The same could be said of Dr. Bobby Bhasker-Rao. Renowned in the field of weight loss surgery, he has always operated ahead of the curve. For a long time he achieved successful outcomes for his patients using a minimally invasive laparoscopic approach, but Dr. Bobby, as he is known, was not entirely content. So he embraced the latest in technology and incorporated robotics to refine his vision of minimally invasive surgery. He has performed cutting-

edge robotic weight loss surgery exclusively for two years, earning rave reviews in the process. And now he suggests there are even greater advances to come.

"Eventually, I'll be doing my weight loss procedures with one little incision, so there's going to be no visible scars," he says. Single-site robotic surgery has already been approved for gallbladder removal by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Recently, Dr. Bobby performed a single-site cholecystectomy on a woman, robotically removing her gallbladder through one tiny incision in her belly button. In the future, pending FDA approval, he plans to extrapolate this technique and

perform single-site robotic bariatric surgery as well. "I definitely see it going that way, and this is just the beginning," he says.

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 procedures, and revisional measures. He has successfully completed more than 1,600 of these procedures and boasts zero mortality rate. He is one of a very

small number of surgeons, — only 30 or so nationwide — who performs these types of procedures robotically. Because he owns the distinction of being the highest-volume and most experienced robotic bariatric surgeon on the West Coast, he's in great demand to proctor and train surgeons around the United States.

### A SUPERLATIVE METHOD

Dr. Bobby was the first doctor in Southern California to perform this type of surgery. His Lite Life Surgery practice offers the only comprehensive robotic bariatric surgical program in the region. "The biggest advantage of robotic surgery is the 3-D imagery which allows me to see everything in greater detail," he says. "So I can dissect with greater skill. Also, the robotic arms have a 360-degree wrist rotation allowing me to grab a needle and hold it in any direction I want to sew. My suturing is, therefore, much more precise."

The precision and accuracy this type of surgery affords, and its increased levels of safety for the patient, has convinced Dr. Bobby of its superlativeness. Ergonomically, it's also the best way for a surgeon to operate. "I'm sitting down, my head positioned at the viewer, comfortably going about my business. Honestly, at the end of these procedures, I don't even feel like I did an operation," he says. A less fatigued surgeon is more competent, which no doubt accounts for Dr. Bobby's unblemished record and continued success with patients.

"He's my rock star," says Sharon Joraanstad, of Rancho Mirage, who underwent a robotic gastric bypass in April 2012. So often other health issues in addition to morbid obesity force the

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*It's very rewarding for us to see patients who are so appreciative of their dramatic health gains, improved appearance, and increased self-esteem.*



*Dr Bobby with the da Vinci Robot*

hand of patients needing these procedures. That was Joraanstad's story, and two issues were resolved in wake of her robotic bariatric surgery: a serious esophagus problem was repaired, plus she's gone on to lose 87 pounds. "I've had absolutely no problems, no symptoms like those prior to the surgery regarding my esophagus. All the medications I was taking before were immediately cut in half and, in some cases, completely eliminated" she says. Joraanstad is particularly enamored by the follow-up care she receives. "Dr. Bobby is on call 24/7. He has his cell phone ready for anybody in trouble or who needs him. Once you become a patient, he's very protective."

#### **PRaised BY PATIENTS AND PEERS ALIKE**

Many awards have been bestowed upon Dr. Bobby confirming his surgical gifts and compassionate nature. He was recently recognized as one of the "**Top Surgeons in**

**the Nation**" published June 1, 2013 in *The New York Times*. In 2010 and 2011, he was awarded the Patient Choice Award and America's Most Compassionate Doctor Award. In 2010, he was nationally recognized as Best of the Best among Bariatric Surgeons. And in 2008, he was awarded the Center of Excellence Surgeon and Center of Excellence Practice designations by Medicare and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery.

Dr. Bobby and his support team at Lite Life Surgery consider gastric bypass surgery, sleeve gastrectomies, and lap bands to be tools a patient can access to achieve and sustain dramatic weight loss. "What we really promote with any type of bariatric procedure is pre- and post-surgical care as well as tool-management counseling," he says. He relies on the expertise of Katie Lira, MS, R.D., on-staff registered dietitian, who customizes a complete nutrition, exercise, and behavioral modification plan for each patient to assure

long term success. This comprehensive program with an acclaimed follow-up care is why Lite Life Surgery consistently reports the best outcomes in the country.

#### **A MIRACLE SURGERY**

While weight loss surgery can dramatically improve a person's appearance and boost self-esteem immeasurably, the health benefits an individual gains should never be understated. There are about 30 co-morbidities associated with obesity, including Type 2 diabetes and hypertension. Many of them are resolved virtually overnight. This leads Dr. Bobby to describe bariatric procedures as "miracle" operations. It's one of the best gifts a morbidly obese person can give themselves.

"It's motivating for me to see how very appreciative patients are after undergoing this life-changing procedure," Dr. Bobby says. "It gives me immense satisfaction. I can't imagine being in any other field of service." ■