Reply to a Letter to the Editor: Bariatric Surgery in Class I Obesity. A Position Statement from the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders (IFSO) —Obesity Surgery 2014;24:487–519

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Reply

Frattoni et al. comment the recent IFSO Position Statement on the application of bariatric surgery in class I obesity, for which I had the honor to serve as the first and corresponding author. The comments stress again the limitations of BMI as an index of the severity of the obesity status and suggest that a better phenotyping of obese patients may help in selecting the best available treatment and predicting weight loss. I substantially agree with these comments. I would just add a couple of additional thoughts:

1. We all agree that BMI is an imperfect and failing index, but it conserves anyway an important role as predictor of disease and mortality. We can criticize BMI and comorbidities as very crude indicators, but we cannot discard them completely. Please, do not throw out the baby with the bathwater.
2. Obesity is a very complex disease for which we cannot use oversimplified clinical decision making processes. In the position statement, a long list of clinical factors that should be considered and integrated in a comprehensive evaluation system for the selection or the pri-

oritization of obese patients for bariatric surgery has been listed. These factors include body composition, fat distribution, ectopic fat deposition, cardiovascular risk factors, obesity-related comorbidities, high risk for type 2 diabetes, early markers of atherosclerosis, initial signs of organ damage, and socio and psychological issues, including functional status. Age is certainly a factor that should be included. It is quite possible that future research may add some further phenotyping factors related to genetics, microbiota, or something else. In my opinion, however, any future discovery should be added to our present knowledge and would not substitute them. Thus, I believe that the complexity of the decisions would probably increase as further elements will add to this already complex scenario. Please, do not search too simple solutions to such a complex problem.

Conflict of Interest Luca Busetto declares the following potential conflicts of interest: payment for board membership and reimbursement for travel expenses from Allergan and payment as speaker from Enteromedics.

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