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Patients with Diabetes: Perspectives on Obesity Management and Barriers to Care

Sabrina Huq

Supriya Todkar

Sharon Lahiri



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Sabrina Huq MD, Supriya Todkar MD, and Sharon Lahiri, MD

**Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, Bone and Mineral Disorders
Henry Ford Hospital**



Background

- Obesity is a public health crisis in the U.S.
- The connection between obesity and diabetes is well-established.
- 87.5% of U.S. adults with diabetes were overweight or obese from 2011-2014 (CDC)
- 86% of adults are projected to be overweight or obese and 51% obese by year 2030. (NHANES)
- Provider perceptions of obesity management and barriers to care have been studied but limited data is available on patient perceptions especially in patients with diabetes and obesity.

Objective

At Henry Ford Hospital Endocrinology Clinic:

- Determine if obese patients are talking with providers about obesity.
- Identify barriers to raising the subject of weight management.
- Identify types of interventions raised by patients who are obese and reasons for not discussing these treatment options.
- Identify types of providers or specialists with whom patients discuss their weight
- Determine patients' perception of their weight and need for weight loss.

Methods

- An IRB-approved 48-question online survey was administered to adult, nonpregnant English-speaking patients with diabetes and obesity (BMI \geq 30 kg/m²) seen at Henry Ford Endocrinology Clinic New Center One.
- The survey was voluntary and anonymous. Data collected using REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture).
- Questions addressed demographics, patient knowledge and perception of obesity, whether or not different weight management options were discussed, and patient perceptions of barriers to weight loss.
- 90 surveys were completed.



Demographics

Demographic	Results: 90 surveys completed.	
Age	61.1%	45-64 21% >64 16.7% ≤44
Gender	60.7%	Female 39.3% Male
BMI (kg/m²)	39%	BMI 35-39.9 35% BMI 30-34.9 26.7% BMI >40
Annual Income	32.3%	<\$25,000 23.3% \$25,000-\$49,000 30% \$50,000-\$100,000 6.6% >\$100,000
Ethnicity	71.1%	African American 24.4% Caucasian 4.4% Other (Middle Eastern, Hispanic, Asian)



Patient Perceptions on Obesity Comorbidities and BMI

- **>90%** were aware that obesity was associated with hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and early death
- BUT **52.3% were NOT aware of their BMI**
 - Despite being obese (BMI>30 kg/m²):
 - 63.6% perceived themselves as overweight
 - 5.7% perceived themselves to be normal weight
- For why it is important to lose weight:
 - Better physical function (88.8%)
 - Decreased medications (75.3%)
 - Improved self-esteem (55.1%)
 - Physical appearance (44/49.4%)



Patient Perceptions on Addressing Weight Loss:

- 45.6% asked their health care providers (HCPs) about obesity treatment
- 76% recalled their HCP discussing obesity
- Respondents discussed obesity with Primary Care (77.8%), Endocrinology (50.8%), Bariatric Surgery (11.1%), diabetes educator (18%), and dietician (23.8%)
- >70% discussed diet and exercise, 21% were referred to a formal weight loss program.
- Few were referred to a specialty that manages obesity (3%), discussed anti-obesity medications (6.7%), or bariatric surgery (11%)
- Not discussing obesity was explained by knowing what to do (46.7%) and self-responsibility to manage weight (40%)



Patient Perceptions: Barriers to Weight Loss Methods

- **Dietary changes**: Lack of time (33.3%), high cost (45.2%), knowledge (29.8%), or motivation (21.4%)
- **Exercise**: Lack of time (43%) or inability to exercise due to health problems (20.3%)
- **Anti-obesity medications**: Lack of knowledge (39.5%) and concern with side effects (26.7%)
- **Bariatric surgery**: Risk of complications (34.9%), expense (17.4%), and lack of knowledge (18.6%)
- **Barriers to initiating weight loss**: Preference for unhealthy food (51.1%) and lack of exercise (69.3%).



Conclusions

- Findings reveal an excellent awareness of obesity as a health problem in our patient population
- Most have discussed diet and exercise with their HCPs.
- However, >50% were unaware of their BMI. There is a need to increase awareness of diagnosis of obesity.
- Few referrals are made to specialties that manage obesity and few discuss anti-obesity medications and bariatric surgery evaluation.
- There is a need for more education of patients, and likely HCPs, to improve knowledge of regarding anti-obesity medications and bariatric surgery.