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Self-assessment of person-centered perceptions in the secondary care obesity setting: feasibility and utility

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Background: In secondary care obesity management there is a real risk of overlooking day-to-day aspects of obesity and obese individuals’ self perceptions, both of which have the potential to influence outcomes.

Methodology: Previously validated self assessment questionnaires were used to acquire data from a person-centered perspective of obesity. These assessments were obtained at first referral visits to a secondary care obesity clinic.

Results: 94 individuals (79 females) provided assessments, ages 18-73 years with BMI 30.2-81.1 kg/m². 76.6% identified previous attempts at weight loss. Of those, 56.9% quantified up to 50 attempts and 43.1% were unable to enumerate attempts. Nobody wanted to lose <10% of their body weight and almost half (47.8%) wanted to lose >30%. Problems with activities of daily living in this sedentary group were high: 60.6% reported moderate/high scores for difficulty (correlation with BMI = 0.3, p<0.01). They reported high levels of food cravings, poor sleep, body pain, sweating and breathlessness. Statistically significant correlations were found between food cravings and guilt, boredom and poor sleep. Beliefs indicated that 72.9% felt responsible for their own weight. While responding to questions about external locus of control only 22.8% agreed.

Conclusion: Health professionals should take account of the perceptions of those who seek treatment for their obesity. Weight loss expectations and beliefs should be addressed before implementing weight loss interventions. We show the feasibility and utility of incorporating physical, emotional and social needs self-assessments into a secondary care obesity setting.

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Body composition and body image perception in portuguese and spanish college students: Comparative study between overweight/obese and normal weight women

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Objective: To evaluate body image perception and compare with real measures of body composition between overweight/obese and normal weight women college students.

Subjects: The reported sample included 600 students from Portugal and Spain.

Material and Methods: The anthropometry variables: weight, height, skinfolds, circumferences and body mass index, waist-hip ratio, percentage of body fat and fat-free mass. FFM were compared with reference values. The body image perception and satisfaction were estimated using Somatotypic Matrix and Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ/44).

With the difference between actual and ideal measures was obtained the dissatisfaction through body image. For data analysis was used t-test and Pearson correlation.

Results: 10.7% of the Spanish sample was overweight/obese. Statistical significance was found between real and ideal FFM (P<0.01), showing a medium body dissatisfaction. Fat mass was well estimated.

The Portuguese measures are elapsing now. The results will be finished before the congress date.

Conclusions: These results constitute a first approach of body image perception and satisfaction, in Portuguese and Spanish students.

Recent studies consider the cultural thinness preoccupation, the weight prejudice and disturbances in body image, mainly a discrepancy between perceived and ideal body image, extending beyond the health risks associated with obesity, and have become a serious problem. And the effect of body size and composition feedback is more pronounced in overweight. Our study shows the importance of public health actions in the education of body image perception and satisfaction in Portugal and Spain, as a measure preventing eating disorders and other mental disturbances, especially between overweight/obese women.

Key words: body image, self-estimation, body mass index, overweight/obesity, Portuguese and Spanish women.