

The Perception of Medical Students Regarding the Approach to Obesity as a Priority

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Abstract

Obesity is a chronic disease and increasing incidence, studies reveal that treating and preventing seven of the top 10 killer diseases. Although much is published about the theme, there is a degree of ignorance on the part of the medical community about the treatment of obesity and its impact on chronic diseases. The present work investigated the medical student's view of the impact of obesity as a priority when dealing with related comorbidities. A survey was conducted, assessing the medical student's perception of the patient with obesity. Of a total of 377 students, 267 (70.82%) stated that other diseases such as diabetes and hypertension should be prioritized when evaluating the obese patient, while 110 (29.17%) stated that obesity should be prioritized. Based on the outcomes presented, it can be concluded that the perception of medical students regarding obesity approach still shows a predominance opinions that other diseases should be a priority over obesity.

Keywords: Obesity; Medical Students; Metabolic Syndrome

Introduction

Obesity is a chronic disease and increasing incidence, studies reveal that treating and preventing seven of the top 10 killer diseases in the US are intrinsically linked to obesity management [1,2].

Between the most common complications related to overweight and obesity are diabetes and hypertension, components of the metabolic syndrome that confers increased risk cardiovascular [3,4]. The obesity approach has a direct impact on prevention and treatment of its

complications and should be a priority in medical evaluation particularly considering the social and financial impact [5,6]. Although much is published about the theme, there is a degree of ignorance on the part of the medical community about the treatment of obesity and its impact on chronic diseases, the already observed in medical students [7,8]. The present work investigated the medical student's view of the impact of obesity as a priority when dealing with related comorbidities.

Methodology

A survey was conducted through the Google Forms platform containing 18 questions, assessing the medical student's perception of the patient with obesity, which were answered by 377 students from the Metropolitan Region of Recife. Those who answered "YES" were analyzed in four variables: Gender, Age, if the interviewee was obese and which period he / she attended. The data were analyzed descriptively and through the one-way ANOVA Test considering $p \leq 0.05$.

Results

Of a total of 377 students, 267 (70.82%) stated that other diseases such as diabetes and hypertension should be prioritized when evaluating the obese patient, while 110 (29.17%) stated that obesity should be prioritized.

From students participants who answered "YES", 247 were attending the basic cycle (92.51%) and 20 (7.49%) were in boarding school ($p = 0.02$). Of the responses analyzed 17% ($n = 46$) were from students attending the first period, 11% ($n = 30$) the second period and 16% ($n = 44$) the third period.

The average age of the students is 21 years and 5 months. Among the students 180 (67.41%) were female and the remaining 87 (32.58%) male. The survey, too, was answered by 25 obese students (6.63%); of these 16 (64%) answered "YES".

Conclusion

Based on the outcomes presented, it can be concluded that the perception of medical students regarding obesity

approach still shows a predominance opinions that other diseases should be a priority over obesity.

Among the 70% who chose not to prioritize obesity, it was not possible to define a standard profile regarding gender, age and frequency of obesity of these students. Regarding the period of the course, veteran students showed greater concern in addressing obesity when compared to students in the early periods, more studies on the subject are needed.

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