



Obesity and Stigma in Health Care

Doug Earle – Auditor (retired), patient living with obesity

The following discussion questions are provided as an additional educational tool to accompany this fireside chat video. Please feel free to select the questions that are most relevant to your committee or group and revise and adapt them as needed. As always, we welcome feedback on this or any other NSHEN resource.

Questions:

- What was your initial reaction to Doug’s story?
- Why do you think many physicians find it difficult to discuss weight management with their patients?
- It took nearly two years before Doug was finally tested and treated for his sleep apnea. Can you give some other examples of weight or size-based stigmas that a person with obesity may experience in a health care setting?
- In your opinion, what can health care providers do to help eliminate weight or size-based discrimination in the health care setting?
- Discuss some possible strategies at institutional level and/or governance level that may contribute to improved health care for patients living with obesity
- In 2015, the Canadian Medical Association declared obesity to be a chronic medical disease. How might the shift in focus on obesity as a life-style problem to a chronic medical condition affect people living with obesity?
- Do you think the recognition of obesity as a chronic medical disease may contribute to reducing or eliminating weight or size-based discrimination?
- Do you think the recognition of obesity as a chronic medical disease may contribute to patients living with obesity to endeavour to adopt more physical activities and changes in eating habits with the benefit of living more healthily even if they don’t lose weight?
- Discuss how important it may be to educate patients living with obesity to understand that factors such as genetics, body chemistry and processed foods have contributed to their obesity?
- Consider what strategies physicians have adopted to educate patients with other chronic medical diseases that could be applied to patients living with obesity so as to involve these patients in achieving improvements in their health.

Resources

Canadian Obesity Network <http://www.obesitynetwork.ca/>

Canadian Obesity Network: What is Obesity. <http://www.obesitynetwork.ca/understanding-obesity>
[Accessed may 30, 2018]

Flint, S.W., Oliver, E.J., Copeland, R.J. 2017. Editorial: Obesity Stigma in Healthcare: Impacts on Policy, Practice, and Patients. *Frontiers in Psychology* 2017; 8: 2149.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5732360/>

Flint, S.W. and Oliver, E. How stigma in the healthcare system is undermining efforts to reduce obesity. *The Conversation*. Published March 23, 2018. <http://theconversation.com/how-stigma-in-the-healthcare-system-is-undermining-efforts-to-reduce-obesity-93089>

Rand, K. Vallis, Aston, M.; Price, S.; Piccinini-Vallis, H.; Rehman, L.; Kirk, S.F.L. (2017). "It is not the diet; it is the mental part we need help with." A multilevel analysis of psychological, emotional, and social well-being in obesity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Health and Well-being*; 12(1):1306421 (published online 2017, April 18. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5421368/>

Rich, P. CMA recognizes obesity as a disease. Canadian Medical Association. 2015. September 10, 2015. <https://www.cma.ca/En/Pages/cma-recognizes-obesity-as-a-disease.aspx>

Roussy, K. 2017. 'Working with one arm tied behind our back': Hospitals are ill-equipped to treat obese patients, experts say. CBC News, September 28, 2017. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/health-hospital-obesity-bariatric-michaelgarronhospital-uofalberta-1.4305767>

Dr. Sharma. (2015) Canadian Medical Association Declares Obesity A Chronic Disease. Dr. Shama's Obesity notes. Monday October 12, 2015. <http://www.drsharma.ca/canadian-medical-association-declares-obesity-a-chronic-disease>

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