

An Exploratory Study on the Level of Awareness and Common Barriers of Physicians on Overweight and Obesity Management in Bangladesh

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Abstract : Overweight and obesity is increasing at an alarming rate and a leading risk factor for morbidity throughout the world. In a country like Bangladesh where under nutrition and overweight both co-exist at the same time, but this issue has been underexplored as expected. The aim of the present study was to assess the knowledge, attitudes and identify the barriers of the physicians regarding overweight and obesity management on an urban hospital of Dhaka city in Bangladesh. A simple cross sectional study was conducted at two selected government and two private hospital to assess the knowledge, attitude and common barriers regarding overweight and obesity management among healthcare professionals. One hundred and fifty five physicians were surveyed. A standard questionnaire was constructed in local language and interview was administrated. Among the 155 physicians, majority 53 (34.20%) were working on SMC, 36 (23.20%) from DMC, 33 (21.30%) were based on SSMC and the rest 33 (21.30%) were from HFRCMH. Mean age of the study physicians were 31.88 ± 5.92 . Majority of the physicians 80 (51.60%) were not able to answer the correct prevalence of obesity but also a substantial number of them 75(48.40%) could mark the right answer. Among the physicians 150 (96.77%) reported BMI as a diagnostic index for overweight and obesity, where as 43 (27.74%) waist circumference, 30 (19.35%) waist hip ratio and 26 (16.77%) marked mid-arm circumference. A substantial proportion 71 (46.70%) of the physicians thought that they do not have much to do controlling weight problem in Bangladesh context though it has been opposed by 42 (27.60%) of the physicians and 39(25.70%) was neutral to comment. The majority of them 147 (96.1%) thought that a family based education program would be beneficial followed by 145 (94.8%) physicians mentioned about raising awareness among mothers as she is the primary caregiver. The idea of a school based education program will also help to early intervene referred by 142 (92.8%) of the physicians. Community based education program was also appreciated by 136 (89.5%) of the physicians. About 74 (47.7%) of them think that the patients still lack in motivation to maintain their weight properly at the same time too many patients to deal with can be a barrier as well assumed by 73 (47.1%) of them. Lack of national policy or management guideline can act as an obstacle told by 60 (38.7%) of the physicians. The relationship of practicing as a part of the general examination and chronic disease management was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) with physician occupational status. As besides, perceived barriers like lack of parents support, lack of a national policy was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) with physician occupational status. For the young physician, more training programme will be needed to transform their knowledge and attitude into practice. However, several important barriers interface for the physician treatment efforts and need to address.

Keywords : obesity management, physician, awareness, barriers, Bangladesh

Conference Title : ICPHMT 2016 : International Conference on Public Health and Medical Technology

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : March 03-04, 2016