

PROJECT BRIEF

Weight Loss: Perceptions and Self-Motivators in Family Medicine Patients

Background

Nearly two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight and 30.5% are obese¹. As a result of its high prevalence in minorities, this is an even greater concern in underserved populations, which comprise a large percentage of the patient population at Aurora Sinai Family Care Center and St. Luke's Family Practice. Adverse health consequences associated with obesity also make addressing this issue vital to quality patient care and education for disease prevention.

Objectives

The goals of this project are to:

- obtain insight into patient perceptions of their weight compared to their actual body mass index (BMI) and
- compare the perceptions of body weight across gender and cultural subpopulations.

Timeline

November 2006 - September 2007

Design

- Cross sectional survey
- Patients presenting for physicals, well visits, or chronic disease follow-up at two Aurora Family Medicine Residency clinics.
- N=170

Population

This study examines adult patients at two urban family medicine clinics in the City of Milwaukee.

Findings

- Potential health problems and strangers opinions are cited as reasons for weight loss.
- Stress and lack of time are related to BMI.
- Disability remains a predictor of BMI after accounting for age and gender.

Conclusions

Providers need to consider non-health related factors such as finances, unsafe neighborhoods, stress, and embarrassment when providing weight loss counseling.

Local Investigators and Staff

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¹ Flegal KM, Carroll MD, Ogden CL, et al. Prevalence and trends in obesity among US adults, 1999-2000. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2002; 228:1723-1727.

The Center for Urban Population Health is a partnership among the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Aurora Health Care, Inc. Our mission is advancing population health research and education to improve the health of urban communities.