

Family Medicine Clerkship

Curriculum Resources



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Obesity and Nutrition

OVERVIEW

The CDC notes, "In the United States, obesity has risen at an epidemic rate during the past 20 years. One of the national health objectives for the year 2010 is to reduce the prevalence of obesity among adults to less than 15%. Research indicates that the situation is worsening rather than improving..." (1) Based on high prevalence in all population groups, virtually every health care provider can expect to provide care for patients who are obese. (2) The Surgeon General issued a Call to Action on Obesity in 2002, noting "...Recognition of the epidemic of overweight and obesity is relatively recent, and there remain enormous challenges and opportunities in finding solutions to this public health crisis. Overweight and obesity must be approached as preventable and treatable problems with realistic and exciting opportunities to improve health and save lives..." (3) Physicians need to play an active role in the office and in the community in helping patients lose excess weight, improve nutrition, and exercise regularly.

1. CDC's Web site on "Overweight and Obesity"
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/>
Last accessed July 23, 2004.
2. National Task Force on the Prevention and Treatment of Obesity. Medical Care for Obese Patients: Advice for Health Care Professionals. Am Fam Physician 2002; 65:81-8.
<http://www.aafp.org/afp/20020101/81.html>
3. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, 2001.
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/>

TOPIC LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

(Organized by ACGME Competencies)

Patient Care

GOAL: Students will be able to assess accurately a patient's Basal Metabolic Index (BMI).

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Calculate a body mass index for an adult and a child.
- Interpret the BMI's significance for the patient's health status and other risk factors for heart disease and diabetes.
- Interpret BMI for children using the CDC growth charts for BMI for age
<http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts>

GOAL: Students will appropriately discuss dietary habits, physical activity, and nutritional

status with patients.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Use a dietary assessment tool to identify excesses and deficiencies in nutrients and prescribe dietary changes that can make an impact (e.g., WAVE, REAP, Rate Your Plate, or Food Guide Pyramid for young children).
- Describe to patients the relationship between risk of disease and diet, dietary supplements, physical activity, and nutritional status.

GOAL: Students will be sensitive to individual and cultural differences in their development of treatment plans.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Discuss with patients and family the importance of lifestyle changes in the management of weight.
- Develop treatment plans in the context of each patient's life and environment.

Medical Knowledge

GOAL: The students will understand the significance of nutrition and obesity in health promotion and disease prevention.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Discuss the epidemiology of overweight and obesity for adults and children, including racial and ethnic differences.
- Describe the USPSTF recommendations for screening for obesity in adults and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for screening children.

GOAL: Students will understand the pathophysiology and risks of untreated obesity.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Describe the end organ complications of untreated obesity.
- Describe the definition of body mass index and demonstrate its calculation and interpretation for adults, children, and seniors.
- Describe how to make the diagnosis of obesity.
- Discuss the initial evaluation of a patient with a new diagnosis of obesity.

GOAL: Students will understand the rationale for treatment plans for obesity.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Describe, in general, the evidence for therapy of obesity, including diet, physical activity, behavior change, pharmacology (OTC and prescription), and surgery.
- Discuss the evidence for the role of lifestyle changes: decreased caloric intake, increased physical activity.

- Discuss the side effects and costs of commonly used medications, both those medications that contribute to weight gain as a side effect, and those medications taken to facilitate weight loss.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

GOAL: Students will understand the role of screening for obesity in practice and community settings.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Describe how measurement of body mass index is monitored in their assigned clerkship site.
- Consider the impact of environment and neighborhood on adherence to treatment plans and life style changes.

GOAL: Students will understand the role of practice-based improvement.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of practice analysis for a population with overweight and obesity.

GOAL: Students will bring up-to-date evidence to the point of clinical care.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Identify gaps in their own knowledge and frame appropriate clinical questions in regard to overweight and obesity and sedentary life style.
- Use best evidence to answer clinical questions about overweight and obesity.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

GOAL: Students will understand the importance of effective communication with patients and families in the management of weight.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Assess an individual patient's readiness to change. (e.g., using a questionnaire for patients to assess their readiness for weight loss)
- Convey to a patient realistic and safe goals for weight loss.
- Describe short- and long-term treatment plans for overweight and obesity, including follow-up and monitoring.
- Demonstrate inclusion of patients and families (as appropriate) in the development of treatment plans.
- Demonstrate effective listening skills and empathy to improve patient adherence to lifestyle modifications such as diet and physical activity.

Professionalism

GOAL: Students will demonstrate ability to care for patients with obesity from diverse patient backgrounds, different sizes, and at different points in their treatment.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate acceptance of a patient, regardless of lifestyle or weight.
- Demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness with patients who are not adhering to treatment plans.
- Reflect on personal frustrations when patients are not adherent to evidence-based plans.
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship of obesity to culture, age, gender, and disabilities.

Systems-Based Practice

GOAL: Students will understand the impact of health care systems and environments on the management of overweight and obesity.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Describe cost effective strategies for treatment of obesity using different formularies.
- Analyze barriers to effective integrated treatment of overweight and obesity.
- Provide patient education tools (e.g., a handout on how to read nutrition labels).
- Demonstrate appropriate referral to other professionals and resources (e.g., registered dietitian/nutritionists, behavioralists, physical therapists, commercial weight loss programs; pharmacists, nurses, social workers, and community agencies) in the treatment of obesity.

Educational Methods and Resources

Clinical Experience

- Observe a videotaped patient encounter.
- Co-counsel (with dietitian, physician or other health care professional) a patient with a BMI >30, and write the chart note.
- Measure BMIs, waist circumference (to document abdominal obesity).
- Assess, using a tool, the dietary pattern of a patient.
- Assess physical activity.
- Calculate Basal Energy Expenditure (BEE) and estimate calories used during different types and duration of physical activities.

Independent Learning

- Analyze own diet for nutrient adequacy. Recommended site is the USDA Healthy Eating Index at <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/healthyeating.html>
- Calculate own BMI http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.htm
BMI tables for PDA http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/bmi_palm.htm

- Write personal weight prescription to gain, lose, maintain weight (include diet and physical activity.)

Small-Group Learning

- Bring a patient who has struggled with weight to a small-group session. Have patient describe their encounters with doctors related to weight management.

Published Material

- [STFM Group on Nutrition online monograph](#), Physician's Curriculum in Clinical Nutrition: Primary Care Physician Curriculum Guide for Training Physician Practice Behavior Skills and Attitudes Across the Curriculum, developed by the Nutrition Academic Awards Program.

Web Sites

- Web cases from UCLA ([Richard Usatine, MD](#))
- Virtual Hospital Study Guide on Obesity:
http://www.vh.org/navigation/vh/topics/adult_patient_obesity.html
- Assessment and Management of the Obese and Overweight Adult Patients. Interactive Web site.
Requires free registration.
<http://obesitycme.nhlbi.nih.gov/>
- General Weight Control Guidelines
<http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/heart/generalWeightD.html>
- Beginning an Exercise Program
<http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/heart/exercise.html>
- Shape Up America!
<http://www.shapeup.org/index.htm>
- Weight Control Information Network
<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/nutrit.htm>
- Aim for a Healthy Weight-Information for Patients and the Public
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/index.htm
- USDA's Interactive Healthy Eating Index
<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/healthyeating.html>
- Guidelines on Overweight and Obesity: Electronic Textbook
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/e_txtbk/index.htm
- Practice Guidelines for the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults from National Institutes of Health
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/ob_home.htm
- Aim for a Healthy Weight-Information for Health Professionals
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/profmats.htm
- BMI table
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.htm
- BMI for Palm OS
http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/bmi_palm.htm
- Binge Eating Disorder
<http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/nutrit/pubs/binge.htm>

- Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire
<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/apfri/par-q.htm>
- Readiness for lifestyle change questionnaire
http://www.swmed.edu/naa/quizzes/wt_loss_quiz.htm
- Nutrition Facts Label
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>
- This Web site has recommendations for what health care can do for preventing/treating obesity in children.
<http://www.nchealthyweight.com>
- Americans in Motion. The mission is to improve the health of all Americans by implementing a multifaceted fitness program addressing physical activity, nutrition, and emotional well-being in the individual, family, and community. The AIM initiative is conceptualized to be a readily available resource to family physicians who wish to promote "fitness" as a path to health for all members of the American family.
<http://www.aafp.org/x22874.xml>

Contact People

- [STFM Group on Nutrition](#)
- Kathy Kolasa, ECU

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Standardized Patient Cases

- Counseling an overweight or obese patient concerning lifestyle changes.

Clinical Assessment

- Observation of the student dealing with an overweight/obese patient.

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