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How did an albino patient lose 148 lbs of weight? A case report

Zarnain Shah¹, Samaneh A Motanagh² and Syed Wajih Rizvi³

¹Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences, Pakistan

²Ankara University School of Medicine, Turkey

³R-Endocrinology, USA

Introduction: Obesity is a highly prevalent and yet the most neglected disease. The number of overweight and obese people reached 2.3 billion and will reach 700 million worldwide respectively, by the year 2015. Obesity is not a social disgrace but an actual disease with a major genetic component to its etiology. Obesity treatment is a lifelong task. Weight reduction medications should be used as an adjunct to diet restriction, exercise and behavioral modifications, when these measures alone have not resulted in adequate weight loss. We hereby present a case of a morbidly obese male patient with oculocutaneous albinism who has lost 148 lbs of weight. Furthermore, the report highlights the genetic link between oculocutaneous albinism and obesity.

Case Presentation: A 28-year-old male with oculocutaneous albinism was presented with 361.8 lbs of weight (BMI: 62.1) and complaint of difficulty in losing weight. Physical examination revealed hypertension, low intelligence, gynecomastia and infantile testicles. Lab investigations showed unregulated hyperlipidemia and hypotestosteronemia. The patient was prescribed Xenical (Orlistat) 120 mg. Over the period of five years, he lost 83.8 lbs. After this time, Xenical's effectiveness was significantly reduced. Consequently, the patient was started on Victoza (Liraglutide) on which he lost 64 lbs in three years. Thus, a sum of 147.8 lbs of weight was lost without any side effects of the drugs.

Discussion: Obesity needs to be treated within the healthcare system as any other complex disease. We observed Xenical and Victoza to be safe and effective in reducing obesity. Substantial literature has emerged to show that in both Oculocutaneous albinism and Prader-Willi syndrome (the most common genetic cause of obesity) the P gene is mutated on Chromosome 15. This highlights the genetic susceptibility of our albino patient for developing morbid obesity.

Conclusion: Obesity develops from the interplay of both genetic and environmental factors. This case clearly illustrates that Xenical and Victoza can be safe and efficient for weight loss in a morbidly obese patient. Furthermore, scientific research in the genetic aspects of obesity can help develop new strategies towards its prevention and treatment.

syedazarnain@gmail.com

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