

Depression and anxiety in obese patients

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Depression and anxiety associated with obesity are widely noted in research:

Specific psychological difficulties among morbidly obese seeking weight loss surgery include anxiety, disorders, depression, disordered eating, substance abuse and personality disorders (Ashton, Favretti, & Segato, 2008; Mechanick et al., 2008).

The authors reported significant improvements in weight status, anxiety, depression, eating behaviors, relationship status and quality of life among the treatment group...(Nickel et al., 2005).

The morbidly obese suffer the physical, psychological and social consequences of being fat, (such as depression, somatization, interpersonal problems, low social adjustment and low self-esteem), which may be a joint function of factors producing morbid obesity and reactions to obesity. Lykouras, Lefteris, Psychological 2008; Rydén, O., Hedenbro, J.L., & Frederiksen, S.G. (1996); Van Germert, W.G., Severeijns, R.M., & Greve, J.W.M. (1998).

Some studies report lifetime prevalence rates of major depression among morbidly obese people that range from 29% to 56%. This is significantly higher than the lifetime prevalence of major depression in the general population, which is approximately 17%.^{97, 98, 100, 101} Lykouras, Lefteris, Psychological 2008; Glinski, J., Wetzler, S., & Goodman, E. (2001). Hsu, L.K.G., Benotti, P.N., & Dwyer, J. (1998).

Treating depression has been shown to correlate with positive outcomes:

According to the U.S. National Weight Control Registry, a low level of depression and ... triggers for weight loss are associated with successful weight loss maintenance.

Addressing both depression and anxiety in the treatment of obesity needs more attention by the medical and mental health professionals working with the obese.

Biography

Connie Stapleton, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist whose work in the field of addiction and recovery for the past 20 years has resulted in her authoring three books on recovery from obesity. She actively participates with the Obesity Action Coalition, the Weight Loss Surgery Foundation of America, and ObesityHelp. Dr. Stapleton is a national and international speaker: American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons, the World Congress for the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity and Metabolic Disorders, at the Lifestyles Intervention Conference, at the Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health conference and at ObesityHelp conferences nationwide.

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