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Obesity a global paradigm: Do ethnic variations have an impact?

Globally there are 1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, who are overweight and of these over 650 million are obese (WHO) and this rate has tripled since 1975. It is well known that obesity is a risk factor for many chronic conditions including hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer with a huge financial and economic impact. Despite the magnitude of the problem no country in the world has been able to successfully reduce the rate of obesity in the last 30 years. In the times of global migration, there are people belonging to different ethnicities residing in a geographic location away from their ethnic origin which presents a unique challenge in the diagnosis and management of different diseases. This over the years has proven to be a very important issue in the field of obesity due to the variability that arises in diagnosis and management of overweight/obesity due to ethnic variations. There are different criteria used for identification of overweight/obesity based on ethnicity and also a difference in modalities of treatment based on variations due to genetics, dietary habits, exercise behavior patterns and cultural norms. Despite obesity being a global epidemic, physicians and related health care professionals serve as inadequate sources of information for identification and management of overweight/obesity. This may be more pronounced when there is a diverse ethnic group due lack of knowledge on specific ethnic guidelines and also culturally sensitive treatment plans. Successful management of overweight and obese patients globally needs physicians and health care professionals all over the world to come together and be more aware and cognizant of the ethnic related variations and use resources appropriately to help manage the disease. The main objectives of the study are: Understanding the global impact of obesity, understanding the differences in the diagnosis and management of obesity among different ethnic group of patients and reviewing the future direction of management of obesity in light of its impact on multiple medical diseases with attention to variability related to ethnicity.

Biography

Deepa Iyengar is a Clinical Associate Professor for the Department of Family and Community Medicine at McGovern Medical School at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). She is also the Medical Director for UT Physicians Family Medicine at the Texas Medical Center and Bellaire. She is board certified in Family Medicine.

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