Insights and Perceptions of Obesity Management in Older People with Obesity

Background

- Obesity management challenges remain, especially among older individuals.
- The ACTION (Ancestral, Care, and Treatment in Obesity management) study examined attitudes and behaviors related to obesity management among people with obesity (PwO).
- It examined attitudes among people aged 65 and older, which constitutes a growing proportion of the population.

Objectives

- Gain a better understanding of the barriers that prevent PwO from receiving high-quality care and the support they need to manage their obesity and improve their health.
- Generate insights that could guide collaborative action to promote effective care for PwO.
- Create a platform for communication to help change how critical stakeholders approach the care of older PwO (≥65 years) and younger (18 to 54 years) PwO are presented.

Study design

- A cross-sectional, US-based, stratified sampling of PwO was used with the following inclusion criterion: body mass index ≥ 30 kg/m² based on self-reported height and weight. Adult PwO (≥18 years) completed online surveys about their experiences, attitudes, and behaviors associated with medical and employer-based obesity management.
- Respondents were recruited through an online panel.

Multidisciplinary team

- The ACTION study was developed by a multidisciplinary team of obesity experts from clinical practice, academic research, public health, employer and public policy fields organized as a steering committee.
- Study objectives and instruments were developed under direction of the steering committee with contracted collaborators through all phases.

Statistical analysis

- Respondent-level weights were applied to the PwO sample to demographic targets for age, household income, ethnicity, race and Hispanic descent, gender, and U.S. Region based on the 2010 Census.
- Sample sizes presented are unweighted. Descriptive statistics (%, other) are weighted. The sample is unweighted otherwise noted.

Survey development

- Surveys were developed following a comprehensive qualitative research phase and with insights from the ACTION steering committee, which also shaped the evaluation of qualitative data, design considerations in survey development, survey implementation, and survey interpretation.
- Participants surveyed: PwO (n=3,008), Healthcare Professionals (HCP) (n=665), and Employer Representatives (n=115). Only data and results from PwO are shown here.
- Study and survey instruments used were HHR approved.

Results

Table 1 Characteristics of People with Obesity Sample (Unweighted %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race, No. (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1,376 (45)</td>
<td>656 (47)</td>
<td>222 (36)</td>
<td>36 / 15</td>
<td>369 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,602 (55)</td>
<td>930 (59)</td>
<td>264 (39)</td>
<td>36 / 15</td>
<td>386 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td>54 (37)</td>
<td>22 (33)</td>
<td>8 / 3</td>
<td>23 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young (18-64)</td>
<td>1,649 (55)</td>
<td>977 (63)</td>
<td>222 (36)</td>
<td>36 / 15</td>
<td>346 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly (65+)</td>
<td>644 (21)</td>
<td>159 (11)</td>
<td>222 (36)</td>
<td>36 / 15</td>
<td>159 (11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Subgroup of People with Obesity with Weight Loss Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Weight Loss Success, No. (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PwO, Total</td>
<td>2,062</td>
<td>126 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PwO, Total Discussed w/ HCP</td>
<td>2,062</td>
<td>126 (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

- Given the greater proportion of older PwO who do not seek support from their HCP for weight loss, providers need to understand and overcome the barriers to seeking obesity care in this group.
- Greater severity and experiences with health-related events may have also made older PwO efforts to manage weight more serious and vigilant, which could be associated with a greater proportion of self-management.
- Considering their greater prevalence of comorbidities, older PwO may need more appropriate, attentive obesity management from HCPs.

Conclusions

- Although similar in many ways, older PwO show important differences in how they perceive and manage their obesity compared with younger PwO.
- Older PwO may require a different approach for obesity management than their younger peers and, therefore, should be addressed by clinicians at least as well as younger PwO.
- Efforts to provide HCPs a better understanding of how older PwO perceive and manage their obesity may further improve outcomes in this group.