Background

Obesity is widely recognized as a major public health issue. In the United States, the increased prevalence of obesity parallels the aging of the nation’s general population. The obesity epidemic has impacted all age groups and both genders. Current estimates suggest that one in three American adults are classified as obese (BMI>30kg/m²) with obesity rates highest among middle-age adults (40–59 years of age; 39.5%), followed by older adults (60 years of age or older; 38.4%) and younger adults (20–39 years of age; 30.3%).

Problem

Obesity-related chronic health conditions and their associated physical and mental health limitations may impact both functional independence and HRQOL for adults. How does physical health and mental health impact HRQOL in individuals with obesity by age, by gender by BMI, and with weight loss?

Purpose

The aim of this study was to identify associations of BMI, gender, age and HRQOL among adults with obesity, before and after an intensive weight loss program.

HRQOL- Definition

WHO definition (1995): not merely the absence of disease but encompasses physical function, role function, mental health, and general health perceptions in context with one’s culture, value system, goals and expectations.

- Multidimensional- influenced by experiences, beliefs, values, expectations and perceptions
- Physical, psychosocial, and social domains
- Degrees of happiness and satisfaction

Results

The 18-39 year old age group had the highest weight at week-1 and lost the greatest percentage of weight by week-17. All patients remained obese at week-17, however, MCS scores increased significantly (p<.000) in the 18-39 year age group and PCS scores increased significantly (p<.000) in the oldest age group.

Intervention/Method

645 participants (age: 18–79 years) completed the HRQOL surveys (SF-36) physical (PCS) and mental component summary (MCS) before and after the weight loss intervention. The intervention consisted of meal replacements and weekly, facilitated group support meetings. The BMI, weight loss, and PCS, MCS scores were measured for between-group and between-gender comparisons.

Conclusion

This study provides comprehensive data that elucidate how obesity and intentional weight loss affect self-rated physical and mental health in adults. Older individuals had higher MCS scores at baseline, females with obesity tended to have a lower MCS scores than males with obesity; and PCS scores increased as weight and BMI decreased.

Holly Kirkland-Walsh, PhD, FNP
kirklandwalsh@ucdavis.edu

Sheri Pruitt, PhD

Janine Cataldo, PhD, RN, FAAN

Jyu-Lin Chen, PhD, RN