MedicalXpress

Among weight loss methods, surgery and drugs achieve highest patient satisfaction

June 23 2014

Obese and overweight Americans who have tried losing weight report far greater overall satisfaction with weight loss surgery and prescription weight loss medications than with diet, exercise and other self-modification methods, an Internet survey finds. The results were presented Saturday at the joint meeting of the International Society of Endocrinology and the Endocrine Society: ICE/ENDO 2014 in Chicago.

"This finding may mean that diet and exercise alone just don't work for a lot of people," said Z. Jason Wang, PhD, the study's principal investigator and director of Health Economics and Outcomes Research at Eisai in Woodcliff Lake, N.J.

The company funded the study, an analysis of data from more than 39,000 respondents to the 2012 National Health and Wellness Survey.

"Drug treatment and bariatric surgical procedures should be considered an integral part of weight management for eligible patients to achieve better treatment satisfaction, which may in turn help patients achieve and maintain better long-term weight loss," Wang said.

Wang and his co-worker, Sharoo Gupta, MS, from Kantar Health in Princeton, N.J., analyzed survey responses for 22,927 obese adults (50 percent women) and 19,121 overweight or obese adults who had at least one weight-related health problem (44 percent women). (Approximately 2,900 obese individuals were included in both groups, according to Wang.)

They found that 58.4 percent of obese people were not currently taking any steps to lose weight. Wang said this finding suggests "a dire need to better educate the public about the health consequences of obesity and the importance of addressing the problem with their doctors."

Among obese individuals who were trying to lose weight, 2.3 percent reported that they underwent weight loss surgery, such as gastric bypass or laparoscopic gastric banding, or they were taking prescription weight loss medication. Together, these people made up the "Surgery/Rx" group. The other 39.3 percent of obese respondents reported using a self-modification method, which included diet, exercise, weight management programs, and over-the-counter weight loss drugs or supplements.

The percentage of obese respondents who reported being extremely or very satisfied with their weight loss method was 39.3 percent in the Surgery/Rx group versus only 20.2 percent in the group that used self-modification methods, Wang reported. Treatment satisfaction was about the same between those using medication and those who had surgery, he said.

The researchers observed similar findings in the overweight respondents, with 44.4 percent of the Surgery/Rx group being extremely or very satisfied with their treatment compared with 19.7 percent of participants who used self-modification.

Wang's company, Eisai, makes the prescription weight loss medication, lorcaserin (marketed as Belviq). Kantar Health administers the annual National Health and Wellness Survey.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

Citation: Among weight loss methods, surgery and drugs achieve highest patient satisfaction

(2014, June 23) retrieved 25 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-06-weight-loss-methods-surgery-drugs.html

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