

# Multi-country study reveals shortcomings in treating obesity

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To address obesity worldwide, changes are needed in both the availability of treatments and the attitudes of clinicians. That's the conclusion of a survey-based study of health professionals.

In the *Clinical Obesity* study, investigators surveyed 274 respondents from a total of 68 low, middle, and [high income countries](#). Respondents in most countries stated that there were professional guidelines for obesity treatment, but adequate services were lacking, especially in lower income countries and in rural areas of most countries.

Lack of treatment was attributed to a broad range of issues including: no clear care pathways from [primary care](#) to specialty services; absent or limited specialty services in some regions; potentially [high costs](#) to patients; long waiting times for surgery; and stigma or blame experienced by patients.

Few countries were willing to define obesity as a disease.

"The lack of investment in clinical services shows a critical failure of government to respect and protect our right to [good health](#)," said senior author Tim Lobstein, Ph.D., of the World Obesity Federation. "Without substantial investment in the treatment of obesity, the demands on health services will increase dramatically—not only because of the rising numbers of people suffering obesity and its consequences, but because the duration of experiencing obesity greatly increases the risk of more disabling diseases requiring greater intensity of interventions".

**More information:** Rachel Jackson Leach et al, Clinical care for obesity: A preliminary survey of sixty-eight countries, *Clinical Obesity* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/cob.12357](https://doi.org/10.1111/cob.12357)

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