

ACTION IO Study¹

ACTION IO
AWARENESS, CARE & TREATMENT IN OBESITY
MANAGEMENT - AN INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION


14,502
People with
obesity


2,785
Healthcare
Professionals

Aims:

Despite increased recognition as a chronic disease, obesity remains greatly underdiagnosed and undertreated. We aimed to identify international perceptions, attitudes, behaviours and barriers to effective obesity care in people with obesity (PwO) and healthcare professionals (HCPs).

Materials and methods:

An online survey was conducted in 11 countries. Participants were adults with obesity and HCPs who were primarily concerned with direct patient care.

Results:

A total of 14,502 PwO and 2,785 HCPs completed the survey. Most PwO (68%) and HCPs (88%) agreed that obesity is a disease. However, 81% of PwO assumed complete responsibility for their own weight loss and only 44% of HCPs agreed that genetics were a barrier. There was a median of three (mean, six) years between the time PwO began struggling with excess weight or obesity and when they first discussed their weight with an HCP. Many PwO were concerned about the impact of excess weight on health (46%) and were motivated to lose weight (48%). Most PwO (68%) would like their HCP to initiate a conversation about weight and only 3% were offended by such a conversation. Among HCPs, belief that patients have little interest in, or motivation for, weight management may constitute a barrier for weight management conversations. When discussed, HCPs typically recommended lifestyle changes; however, more referrals and follow-up appointments are required.

Conclusions:

Our international dataset reveals a need to increase understanding of obesity and improve education concerning its physiological basis and clinical management. Realisation that PwO are motivated to lose weight offers an opportunity for HCPs to initiate earlier weight management conversations.

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1. Caterson ID, Alfadda AA, Auerbach P, *et al.* Gaps to bridge: misalignment between perception, reality and actions in obesity. *Diabetes Obes Metab.* 2019;1–11.