Telemedicine for obesity management: a temporary or long-term solution?
Welcome and introductions

Chair: Joseph Proietto
Professor of Medicine, Department of Medicine Austin Health, University of Melbourne
Clinical Care Committee World Obesity Australia
Housekeeping

• Please use the Q&A function to post comments and questions
• There will be a chance to ask questions after each speaker
• The recording, slides and certificate of attendance will be circulated post-webinar
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<td>Joe Proietto</td>
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<td>Summary of COVID-19 status and rise of telemedicine</td>
<td>Joe Proietto</td>
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<td>The protocol for a successful virtual obesity consultation</td>
<td>Rodrigo Alonso Karlezi</td>
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Meet the speakers

Agbo Urudinachi
Nigeria

Rodrigo Alonso Karlezi
Chile

Mazin Fulaiti
Oman
An update on COVID-19 cases globally

John Hopkins University & Medicine: Coronavirus Resource Center
Why has COVID-19 disrupted the world so severely?

- Very contagious
- Able to cause severe respiratory infection
- Slightly higher mortality than influenza virus
- Absence of vaccine to coronavirus
- Absence of effective antiviral medication
Who is at increased risk of death from COVID-19?

- People aged > 70 years
- Patients on immunosuppressive medication
- People with severe illness of any type
- People with obesity
Why does obesity increase the risk of death from COVID-19?

Obesity is associated with decreased expiratory reserve volume, functional capacity and respiratory system compliance.

In patients with increased abdominal obesity, pulmonary function is further compromised in supine patients by decreased diaphragmatic excursion, making ventilation more difficult.

Furthermore, increased inflammatory cytokines associated with obesity may contribute to the increased morbidity associated with obesity in COVID-19 infections.

Dietz W and Santos-Burgoa C. Obesity and its implications for Covid-19 mortality (letter to the editor) Obesity 1 April 2020
In the absence of effective treatment for COVID-19 and higher risk of death, how can we continue to treat our patients with obesity without putting them and us at risk?
Is telemedicine the answer?

Telemedicine - or telehealth - is the distribution of health-related services and information via electronic information and telecommunication technologies.

It allows long-distance patient and clinician contact, care, advice, reminders, education, intervention, monitoring, and remote admissions.

• Does it work?
• How do we set it up?
• What are the pros and cons of practising telemedicine?
• What role will telemedicine play in the post COVID-19 world?
The protocol for a successful virtual obesity consultation

Rodrigo Alonso Karlezi (M.D, Ph.D.)

Co-Director of the Center for Advanced Metabolic Medicine and Nutrition (CAMMYN), President of the Chilean Atherosclerosis Working Group Corporation, Chile
Some important points

• Obesity is an important risk factor in increasing the severity and mortality of COVID-19

• Patients living with obesity present other associated comorbidities that require treatment and follow-up

• Isolation produces anxiety and mood changes, influencing eating habits, increasing alcohol consumption and reducing physical activity, all of which have important consequences for patients living with obesity.
The impact of the pandemic on medical appointments in Chile

Number of positive Covid-19 cases

Variation in medical consultations

Dynamic quarantines, & since May 15th, quarantine in Metropolitan Region of Santiago

Source: El Mercurio June 6, 2020 and Minsal 22nd June 2020
I wanted to ask about the possibility of restarting my treatment.

Each day in quarantine is getting worse, and it’s affecting my food intake.

I have continued to exercise, but with reduced intensity and frequency.

I don’t want to neglect my weight!

Let me know the steps I should take (unfortunately, I don’t have scales at home).
Identifying barriers in patients living with obesity

- **Connectivity**: internet & webcam access, previous experience & platform
- **Adaptation**: don’t like it, don’t know how, want to avoid check-ups, etc.
- **Family support**: best agent to help the patient - elderly people and children
- **Expectations**: in case of first visit
- **Trust**: in the information
- **Timing and facility**
- **Technical barriers related to consultation**: scale, measurement tape, blood pressure sphyngomanometer availability and correct use.
- **Others**
How do you have a successful telemedicine consultation with patients living with obesity?

- **Pro-active**: prior to consultation, make contact (phone-call, text message, email) to explain the transition to online consultation and what is needed
  - Weight, blood pressure
  - List of medications
  - Blood analysis (recents if possible) that can be sent by email
- **Other team members**: dietitian & psychologist should be involved
- **Any platform is useful**: Zoom, Meet, Team, Facetime, WhatsApp, etc.
- **Invest enough time**: and make the patient *feel comfortable and confident*, a good experience improves the next consultation
- **Establish an outline and protocols**
Other important measures for the management of patients living with obesity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promote physical activity</th>
<th>Online support with dietitian</th>
<th>Online Psychological Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Web information, online classes and others</td>
<td>Reinforce dietary habits, food labeling, recipes, etc.</td>
<td>Stress and anxiety management, how to face the isolation, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Avoid stigmatization</strong></td>
<td><strong>Educate patients on how to filter information online</strong></td>
<td><strong>Establish a treatment plan for the patient</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social media, fad diets, etc.</td>
<td>Including next consultation (face-to-face or telemedicine).</td>
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Use of telemedicine in some Latam countries during pandemic

Since 2016, countries have been implementing different regulations for telemedicine in public and private health systems.

Pre Covid-19

Covid-19

Post Covid-19

Accelerated the process

Most are a “temporary solution”

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What are the benefits and challenges of telemedicine for obesity management?

Agbo Urudinachi (MBBS, FWACP, MSc.)

Consultant Community Health Physician,
Fellow of the West African College of Physicians,
The President of The Obesity Society of Nigeria,
Nigeria
Global overview:

COVID-19 in Nigeria:

This disease has brought enormous changes in the health care domain.

CONFIRMED CASES: 14554
DISCHARGED CASES: 4494
DEATHS: 387

GLOBAL CONFIRMED CASES: 7.15M
GLOBAL DEATHS: 408,000

Source: NCDC 8/06/2020
Telemedicine

TELEMEDICINE

TEXT

AUDIO

EMAIL

STILL IMAGES

VIDEO CONFERENCING
OBESITY INTERVENTIONS

- Population-wide interventions
- Lifestyle & behavioural interventions
- Pharmacological interventions
- Bariatric surgery
Obesity care activities

1. Patient Education
2. Meal Planning
3. Medication Adherence and Management
4. Obesity Care Teleconsultation Services
5. Prenatal, Natal and Post Natal Weight Management
6. Paediatric Obesity Management
7. Elderly Patients Weight Management
8. Post Surgical Care
9. Lifestyle Modification
10. Obesity Care Activities

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Levels of the health system

- MACRO
  - INSURANCE POLICIES
  - PARTNERSHIPS IN HEALTH

- MESO
  - HOSPITALS, HOME HEALTH, SCHOOL HEALTH,
    MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS

- MICRO
  - PATIENTS
  - HCPS

BENEFITS OF TELEHEALTH SPANS THROUGH ALL THE LEVELS OF THE HEALTH SYSTEM.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Benefits to patients</th>
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<tr>
<td>IMPROVED ADHERENCE TO ROUTINES &amp; MEDICATIONS</td>
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<td>IMPROVED QUALITY OF CARE</td>
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<td>IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE</td>
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<tr>
<td>REDUCED MISSED APPOINTMENTS</td>
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<td>ZERO TRAVEL TIMES</td>
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<td>REDUCED PATIENT WAITING TIME</td>
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<tr>
<td>COST EFFECTIVE</td>
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<td>CONVENIENCE</td>
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<td>REACHING UNDERSERVED POPULATION</td>
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Benefits to HCPs

- Improved patient education
- Professional education
- Reduced patient burden in the hospitals
- Revenue generation
- Research

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Benefits to the health system

- Helps with disease surveillance and early detection
- Improve health indicators
- Lower health care costs
Challenges

MACRO
- LACK OF INSURANCE
- LACK OF PARTNERSHIPS FOR TELEMEDICINE
- POOR HEALTH FUNDING
- POOR INTERNET NETWORK

MESO
- UNAVAILABLE TELEMEDICINE SERVICES IN THE INSTITUTIONS.

MICRO
- LACK OF AWARENESS
- POOR HEALTH SEEKING BEHAVIOUR.
Recommendations:

In an evolving health care environment there is need to:

• Institutionalize telehealth as part of our health institutions to serve a majority of citizens that will opt for it
• Train healthcare professionals
• Create awareness on the use of telemedicine
• Build partnerships for telemedicine
• Link up policy makers, telehealth developers and end users
The patient perspective

Mazin Issa Habib Al Fulaiti

Patient representative, Oman
Mazin’s journey

Weight kg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight kg</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15/07/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>15/07/2018</td>
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<td>15/07/2019</td>
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Panel discussion
Is there a role for telemedicine in the post-pandemic world?

Rodrigo Alonso Karlezi  Mazin Fulaiti  Agbo Urudinachi  Joe Proietto
Final remarks

- Telemedicine (either video and audio or just audio alone) can be used effectively for treating obesity
- Telemedicine is a key component of caring for patients with obesity now and in the future
- The pandemic has shown us that Telemedicine can very rapidly offer a method to offer obesity treatment to populations that have no local expertise
- Telemedicine will be successful if we can adapt to workflow and make it sustainable
- It will not replace face-to-face consultation, but will improve follow-up of patients living in other geographical areas or with limited mobility
- Telemedicine can also be used to treat rare obesity syndromes such as Prader-Willi syndrome throughout a country all done from a single centre specialising in this rare and complex condition
Learn more:

WOF have launched an online dossier with a compilation of documents on COVID and obesity.

World Obesity Live will resume on Friday 26th June, focusing on COVID-19, Obesity and Inequity.

Register now!
https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5aFyVQMYQhyHuBOiblalItQ

COVID-19 Resources
- World Obesity Federation https://www.worldobesity.org/resources/resource-library/covid-19-obesity-resources

Other Resources
- SCOPE E-Learning www.scope-elearning.org
- SCOPE twitter: @SCOPEObesity
Thank you!

Please complete our feedback form.

If you have any queries please contact World Obesity at enquiries@worldobesity.org