How much greater is the risk to those who have not been diagnosed with comorbidities?
Since we don’t have widespread testing yet, including people who are without symptoms, we don’t know how obesity affects milder cases of the virus. We do know that for people who are hospitalized with the virus, obesity is associated with increased risk for ICU care, for ventilator use and for death. The more severe the obesity, the greater the risk.

All of this sounds great but if G.P’s don’t know about it then they can’t pass this on to patients. As someone with class 4 obesity, this is the first I have heard of this so passing this information around would be helpful.
Yes, you are correct. We are doing our best to educate health care providers about the need for extra precautions in vulnerable populations.

What is the meaning of ECPO?
EASO Patient Council European Coalition for People Living with Obesity

What about coupling specific home training to telemedicine?
We know that telephonic and electronic platforms can work very well for delivery of lifestyle interventions. It is not necessary to be a health care provider to lead sessions on lifestyle intervention. Of course, the certainty of reimbursement will be an issue.

Do you think telehealth has also reduced potential stigma some patients feel in clinics?
I don’t think telehealth would stigmatize more than in person visits, I found patients to be more open and comfortable

I suppose this could help patients under a comprehensive point of view, so that patients could have greater benefits from coupling pharmacotherapy and training.
What is your opinion in this respect, as an expert?
Great idea, I agree with the comprehensive approach

What are PE and DIC?
PE is Pulmonary Embolus (a blood clot in the lungs) and DIC is Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation, a serious blood clotting disorder

Would you use telehealth to arrange group therapy and group health coaching sessions for obesity patients at this time?
Yes I think online groups is a good option and this can be billed for in United States
By extreme obesity- what BMI is being meant? 40 plus or 50plus?
We usually use the terminology Class 1 obesity (30-35 BMI), Class 2 obesity (35-40 BMI) and Class 3 obesity (40+ BMI). Sometimes, the term super-obesity is used for BMI 60+

Do DIC and PE appear more in obese patient compared to lean patients?
We will have to sort that out after the data comes in. There is already data that ARDS (adult respiratory distress syndrome) is more common and related to BMI... highest with BMI >40.

Please expand on positives AND the negatives of telemedicine?
Pros: convenient for patient and provider; some patients report that the provider looks more at them and less at the computer; efficiency can be good; delivering simple information seems to work best. Cons: technical issues may interrupt or cancel the visit; physical examination is limited to visual inspection; interruptions can occur on both sides of the interaction with pets and family; privacy is less assured; reimbursement rules may be uncertain.

What impact will the link between obesity and covid have on the food industry? Do you think the food industry will begin to take more responsibility for providing healthier foods?
We hope that the increased susceptibility to COVID19 complications will underscore the need for treating obesity seriously and for creating environments that support healthy and active living.

What is PTSD?
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

How can stress affect patients with anorexia? They might eat more or less during the quarantine? How does it affect their mood for food?
We have not seen any data on the impact of COVID-19 and anorexia nervosa or other eating disorders.

How much sleep do you recommend?
The studies show 6-9 hours but recognizing your own sleep behavior and what’s enough for you. A restful, energizing sleep is what’s important.
Sleep apnoea is highly linked with obesity. So please make sure you are checking for that - a stop bang questionnaire can be part of your toolkit to screen for sleep apnoea.

Is there a recommended healthy diet?
Not specifically for COVID-19. This is not the time to go on a strict calorie-reduced diet. Follow national guidelines.
When it comes to mental health and talking to others, do you find that more people living with obesity are inclined to be pleasers as a way of acceptance and therefore are more inclined to be listeners rather than those seeking an ear? If so, any advice on how to change mindset to be able to reach out and say 'I'm having a difficult time too'?

Yes. People with obesity are known to be people pleasers. That is also linked with stress eating in other studies. I think communication is extremely important and please take some time to figure out your thoughts, but allowing yourself to come back another time to say this to your loved ones.

Most people would appreciate taking care of you! Especially nowadays - you'd be doing them a favour. Allow them to take care of you. Journalling is also so important if that's possible. A lot of people I work with have found it helpful, so please make sure you're connecting to yourself too, as well as others!

Is it possible to give a bibliography about Obesity and COVID 19?
World Obesity: https://www.worldobesity.org/resources/resource-library/covid-19-obesity-resources
EASO: https://easo.org/covid-19-and-obesity/
TOS: https://www.obesity.org/

Could you comment on a bound effect of diabetes, obesity and depression?
Yes, obesity + diabetes + depression are syndemically linked. This means that the contributors to all three conditions are common to all three and each one tends to promote the others.

Who is this data available to? Is it publically available?
Yes, anyone can view these. Go to: https://www.worldobesity.org/training-and-events/events

How often do you change the mask per day? How was the effectiveness of different types of masks?
Before shortages, medical personnel changed masks with each patient encounters. In the time of shortages, personnel are assigned a mask and encouraged to use that mask for every encounter.

Do we know anything about mask efficacy in people with obesity?
No, we have not seen any reports discussing this.

How are you ensuring social distancing in your tier 2 groups?
All of our face to face services have stopped and been replaced by telephone clinics until we set up telemedicine

How is bariatric surgery related to Covid-19?
Bariatric surgery is an elective surgery and therefore all has been put on hold except for emergency procedures.

For the patients who do not have internet access during the physical distancing, what options have been offered to patients to keep them connected and stay on track?
Telephones are a great tool in these times. Mail has not been affected in many places and an old-fashioned note can work, too.
How do we handle the almost inevitable increase in weight stigma that is or will increase as a result of emerging evidence of the link between weight and worsening effects of Covid-19?

So glad you brought this up, it is of great concern. We believe that first and foremost, we must educate and advocate that obesity is a serious chronic disease and we need to take it seriously.

I would appreciate if it could be explained fully whether people with obesity are more at risk to catch the virus than regular people, or if their risk is only the worsening of the effects of the virus?

There is no evidence that persons with obesity are at greater risk for getting the virus. The emerging evidence points out that people who HAVE the infection are at increased risk for a more complicated course.

Is there any guideline for people with diabetes and hypertension for managing obesity during COVID-19 pandemic period?

No official guidance per se. We think people with obesity should take extra care with social distancing, hand washing, mask wearing and other preventive measures.

What is the role of nutrition in the management of covid-19?

Insure adequate caloric intake, insure consumption of a variety of foods, especially plant-based foods. Avoid alcohol.

Why are individuals with BMI >40kg/m2 at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus?

The mechanisms for the association are only hypotheses at this point. We hope to have a future discussion of this point.