

Online Training of Primary Care Providers in Obesity Assessment and Management

Bradley Tanner, MD, Clinical Tools, Inc., Chapel Hill, NC

Relevance: In the management and treatment of patients with overweight or obesity these are practice gaps between recommended practice and actual practice. Few primary care physicians routinely provide screening or intervention for weight problems with their patients. Physicians frequently fail to recognize obesity, are not properly educated regarding treatment options, and spend relatively little clinic time treating obesity. Negative attitudes toward people who are obese and discomfort with discussing the topic interfere with effective treatment, including referral.

Background: These gaps represent an opportunity for education and training to have an impact. Strong guidelines exist to guide educational efforts focused on changing knowledge, attitude, practice and self-efficacy related to clinical skills and communication skills. Physicians who are better prepared to approach the subject of obesity and provide more effective screening, diagnosis, and treatment of obesity will be positioned to improve patient care and positively impact patient health. Such training can also potentially help providers prioritize obesity treatment in primary care, and deliver more compassionate and effective care to their patients with overweight or obesity.

Methods: To address this, we have developed interactive, online training for primary care providers focused on assessment, treatment, and referral of patients who are overweight or obesity. With support from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) under NIH grant #2R44DK091144-01A1, we created a CME based skills training activity focused on research, best-practice, and practical ways primary care physicians can address obesity in their practice.



Skills Training for
Primary Care Providers

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Meet Your Patients

We will follow the stories of these patients in order to illustrate how to guide your patients in making lifestyle changes for weight loss and long-term weight management:



MS. JONES

Ms. Jones has been diagnosed with Class II obesity and central adiposity during a routine physical.

How can you quickly assess her current diet and provide a brief intervention based on the results?



MR. ALAIM

Mr. Alaim recently went from "overweight" to "obese;" however, he claims he has not changed his diet.

Could a low level of physical activity be the problem? How would you assess his physical activity level and provide a brief intervention?



MS. COLLINS

During a cholesterol evaluation, Ms. Collins was diagnosed as obese.

How would weight loss impact her cholesterol? What dietary changes should she make as part of her plan for weight loss and long-term weight management?

Results:

 Specific topics of the online program:

- 1) assessment of patients using body mass measurements,
- 2) evidence-based behavior modifications for diet and physical activity for weight management,
- 3) motivational counseling techniques tailored to meet individual weight-loss treatment needs,
- 4) evidence based treatment and referral for behavioral support,
- 5) identifying and referring appropriate candidates for weight-loss surgery,
- 6) appropriate use of medications,
- 7) addressing co-morbid issues, and
- 8) the use of weight-neutral or weight-negative medications.

The 10 hour *AMA PRA Category 1*TM CME experience uses interactive, case-based learning elements. Sample patient/provider dialogues illustrate common scenarios and potential pitfalls that healthcare providers can encounter while speaking with their patients.

Discussion: The *ImpactObesity.com* program is currently being evaluated for impact on knowledge/competence, attitude and self-efficacy. A four-week and six-month follow-up assessment will investigate change in provider behavior, specifically increases in assessment of obesity, treatment, and referral. Subjects receive no compensation other than CME Credit.

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Contact author:

bradtanner@gmail.com

