

THE LANCET

Diabetes & Endocrinology

Supplementary appendix

This appendix formed part of the original submission and has been peer reviewed. We post it as supplied by the authors.

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Supplementary Appendix

Obesity and COVID-19: a call for action from people living with obesity

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The consultation

This position paper has been collectively written by a membership organisation representing over 40,000 people living with obesity, 'Obesity UK' (<https://www.obesityuk.org.uk/>), in partnership with the charity 'UK Association for the Study of Obesity' (<https://www.aso.org.uk/about/>) and a patient advocacy group, the Obesity Empowerment Network (<https://oen.org.uk/>). The consultation used a patient and public involvement approach and was therefore not a research study. Instead, it used INVOLVE recommendations (<https://www.invo.org.uk/>) to invite people living with obesity to share their thoughts and experiences on the impact that COVID-19 was having during the period 15th to 24th April and to contribute to the interpretation and writing of the paper. Invitations for personal perspectives were sent out using Obesity UK social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter), and did not pre-specify any specific type or format of feedback. Responses were received via social media and emails. These were combined with (and interpreted

alongside) perceptions from patient representatives, including the Director of Obesity UK (SLB) and the Director of Bariatric and metabolic surgery within Obesity UK (KC). KC has delivered national support sessions three times per week during lock-down. This 'Obesity UK Bariatric Surgery Support Group' (<https://www.obesityuk.org.uk/support-groups>) provides support and engages with approximately 30-40 people per week who have had, or are listed to have bariatric surgery, those who have used therapeutic interventions, and others that have experience of diet, exercise and behavioural interventions or that may have tried all or none of these. Here, we summarise the main responses to the consultation which includes the voices of 21 people living with obesity, in addition to feedback from KC based on accounts heard during the delivery of the national support group in the first five weeks of lock-down.

Table 1. Key themes identified during the consultation, with example quotes

| Theme | Example quotes from consultation |
|--|--|
| Confusion and fear about the perceived level of risk | <p><i>“Every time I heard the news in the beginning I was getting more and more angry at the tone. ‘10 more people have been confirmed positive for the virus, however 8 of these have underlying conditions or are very elderly’. Oh, well that’s alright then?? The rest of you normal people will be ok.”</i></p> <p><i>“...it is not unreasonable for accurate information to be provided about the risks of the virus”</i></p> |
| Anxiety about access and provision of health care | <p><i>“I am worried about the lack of dignity if I have to go into hospital. What if someone needs to lift me, or move me about and I’m too heavy? Will they have gowns to fit me? What if someone sees me without my clothes? Will the beds be big enough/strong enough?”</i></p> |
| COVID-19 related stigma | <p><i>“... it seems to me that the pandemic has given carte blanche to some people to make unacceptable comments about us, with the insinuation that we are lazy, worthless, a drain on the NHS, not entitled to treatment”.</i></p> <p><i>“...shame associated with the fact they are at risk”.</i></p> <p><i>“...other vulnerable groups don’t have shame. Men aren’t ashamed of being men, old people aren’t ashamed of being old.”</i></p> |
| Lock-down impact on mental health | <p><i>“...this is an immense issue for many people, a huge strain mentally for them, their family, work colleagues and it is all their [people living with obesity] fault!!”</i></p> <p><i>“Got to start the [weight management] battle again, but lacking willpower and motivation”.</i></p> |

*“... I am now struggling to control my binging. I'm not sure why...boredom
anxiety.... I have been trying so hard to get help to stop this happening.”*
