

Women with weight problems asking for help through social networks: a monitoring on quality of life and general health perception

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Background

The Quality of Life (QoL) of overweight and obese subjects is a widely discussed topic. From numerous studies, it emerges that obese persons suffer significant damage as result of their weight in terms of QoL with regard to their physical and psychosocial well-being. Our study aims to evaluate the impact of body weight on quality of life in women who seek help on social networks.

Methods

The study was carried out on a sample of 177 women who approached on Facebook looking for help and treatments for weight loss. We have asked women to fill out the obesity-specific ORWELL 97 (Obesity Related Well-Being)

questionnaire, preceded by short questions on personal data, anthropometric data and cultural activities. Statistical analysis were performed by test T- Student and ANOVA.

Results

The average age was 31.7 (± 6.2) and the average value of BMI was 23.4 (± 7.1); in particular 18% were underweight, 22% normal, 39% overweight and 21% obese. The difference between the average sum of scores in the group who had normal weight and the group who were overweight and obese was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). BMI showed a positive correlation with both occurrence and relevance of physical symptoms. A positive correlation of BMI was found with average sum of scores in the first, second and third groups of questions in ORWELL 97 questionnaire. An analysis of the results indicates that the obese group is strongly characterized by a lower QoL; unexpectedly the same outcome was highlighted for the anorexic women.

Conclusions

The evaluation of QoL and general health perception in women asking for help through social networks appears to be an effective tool to examine the relevance of physical and psychosocial distress and for planning aid groups on the web.

Key messages

- A monitoring on quality of life and general health perception among social network visitors.
- Overweight and obese subjects: evaluation of quality of life and general health perception.