Results

- Forty (47%) patients surveyed were overweight. Fifty-three (63%) patients believed their BMI was in the normal range.
- The healthy BMI group median score was 5.09(IQR 2) vs. 6.91(IQR 4.0) p=0.000.
- Of the patients who had discussed BMI with their physicians, the pBMI vs. rBMI scores were 5.5(IQR 2) vs. 9.1(IQR 0.75)p<0.000 respectively.

Abstract

Objective: To understand if there is a discrepancy between parents’ perception of their child’s body mass index (BMI) and their child’s real BMI.

Methods: A survey was given to every patient during the well-child visit at University Health System Clinic. Inclusion criteria: All children between birth and 12 years. Exclusion criteria: Prematurity, developmental delay, cerebral palsy, severe autism, BMI > 99 percentile, or complex medical condition.

Data collected: Demographics, BMI percentile, past medical history, daily snouted beverage intake, exercise activity, and screen time.

Results: Ninety-four percent of children 0-12 years of age were surveyed, however, two had to be excluded: 93% of parents of overweight children underestimated their child’s BMI by 35 percentile. Of those, 87% believed their child to have a healthy weight and only 32% were willing to participate in a health session. Conclusion: Our data suggests parents of overweight children underestimate their BMI regardless of having had physicians discuss their child’s BMI previously. Moreover, the overwhelming majority (87%) of parents with overweight children believed their child had a healthy weight.

Description of study

- A cross-sectional study was conducted from December 2019 to February 2020 at University Health System clinic in San Antonio.
- A survey (Figure 1) was given to parents of children 0-12 years of age before a primary care well-child visit.
- Participants were categorized into two groups: healthy weight (BMI<85th) and overweight (BMI≥85th). Weight for length was estimated for children < 2 years old.
- To determine pBMI, parents were asked to score their child from 0-10. We transformed the rBMI to a 10-point scale to compare.

Figure 1: Survey that was distributed to parents prior to a well-child visit. Distributed in both English and Spanish.

Conclusions

- In children between 2 and 19 years old, overweight is defined as BMI percentage greater than or equal to 85 and has an estimated prevalence of 30% in the United States. Obesity is defined by BMI percentile of 95 or higher and is seen in 18.5% of those between 2 and 19 years old, with 5.6% being severely obese. The etiology of obesity is multifactorial; however, race and socioeconomic status have been shown to play an important role.
- In our study population, 42% were overweight and 25% were obese. The majority of our patients were Hispanic and had Medicaid insurance, an indicator of a lower socioeconomic status.
- Our data suggests parents of overweight children underestimate their BMI regardless of having had physicians discuss their child’s BMI previously. Moreover, the overwhelming majority (87%) of parents with overweight children believed their child had a healthy weight.
- We recommend that all pediatricians routinely discuss BMI with parents and children as another potential barrier of weight loss.

Future Aims

- We would like to study a larger sample size, include multiple centers to encompass patients of different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and explore potential barriers to weight intervention.
- Additionally, we would like to assess the pediatrician’s comfort in discussing the importance of maintaining a healthy weight with parents and children as another potential barrier of weight loss.

References

10. We transformed the rBMI to a 10-point scale.

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