

# The result of the treatment of obese people is highly dependent on the state of the mental health

## Editorial

Despite the improvement in knowledge about the etiological factors that contribute to the development of obesity, the result of the different methods to treat people suffering from obesity are unsatisfactory both for patients and for the health professionals themselves. In a previous paper I described some barriers that can explain this.<sup>1</sup> An important aspect often forgotten is that the obesity is a chronic disease, and that the body weight is just one of its features.

Basically, the treatment of obese people consists in lifestyle modifications, including changes in their eating pattern and increase in physical activity, what seem like a reasonable approach, but the problem arises when patients cannot follow these recommendations more than a few weeks or months. The reasons that this happens is that changing long-term habits are very difficult, being worse the older you are. It is well known a bidirectional relationship between depression and anxiety with obesity development, thus, the prevalence of these diseases is higher in obese people, and obese people often develop depression or/and anxiety when attempts to modify their eating habits.<sup>2,3</sup> Furthermore, a considerable percentage of patients with obesity suffer other psychological disorders, such as eating disorders, attention deficit, or addictions to some drinks or food.<sup>4,5,6</sup> All these circumstances make very difficult if not impossible to achieve the desired long-term changed of habits.

This dark panorama can be modified with an individualized management of patients, paying particular attention to the aforementioned psychological problems. For this, it is essential that these patients are treated in multidisciplinary units that have trained professionals able to diagnose promptly those anomalies and that the psychological alterations should be treated at the same time as the diet and the physical exercise aspects.<sup>7</sup>

In conclusion, In order to change the often bad results in the treatment of people with obesity, it is necessary that they be treated in multidisciplinary units that include mental health professionals.

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## Conflict of interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest.

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