



ABSTRACT

## Ethical consideration in patients with obesity

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Obesity is an epidemic that is about to overwhelm the economic and health care structures of society. Obesity is a complex medical condition that has roots in genetic, environmental and social exposures that should not be attributed lack of willpower any more than other diseases. One in five adults, one in five children aged 5-12, and one in seven adolescents aged 13-18 in Indonesia are overweight or obese, according to estimates from the 2018 National Basic Health Research survey. Obesity leads to the stigmatization of patients and results in their isolation and discrimination in receiving health care. In many cases, people with obesity are blamed for irresponsible overeating or inactivity, or both. Patients with obesity also face barriers to optimal care that arise from obesity bias in our society and in our medical institutions. There is little doubt that the rising prevalence of obesity places an increasing number of adults and children at risk for chronic diseases that will be challenging to manage. These conditions have major economic implications, leading to direct costs for families due to treatment and hospitalization and increased financial burden on health systems. The use of the following patient-centered communication strategies and guidance can help establish rapport and engage the patient in health care decision making. Multiple discussions may be needed to facilitate an open dialogue and to collaborate with the patient to develop an individualized plan to achieve her desired health, diet, and physical fitness goals. Safe, effective, and compassionate care of patients with obesity may require special considerations in the clinical setting. A supportive clinical setting for patients with obesity optimally includes comfortable, accessible waiting and examination areas with weight-sensitive reading materials; specialized medical equipment, specially designed tables and surgical equipment; and sensitive weighing procedures, including a private weighing area. Patients with obesity should be treated similarly to other patient populations that require additional care or have increased risks of adverse medical outcomes.

**Keywords:** obesity, patients with obesity, stigmatization

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