



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Spanish collaborative study: Description of usual clinical practice in infant obesity[☆]

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KEYWORDS

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Abstract

Introduction: Childhood obesity is a high prevalence health problem. Although there are clinical guidelines for its management, there is variability in its clinical approach. The aim of this study is to describe the usual clinical practice in Paediatric Endocrinology Units in Spain and to evaluate if it resembles the recommended guidelines.

Material and methods: An observational, cross-sectional and descriptive study was carried out by means of a questionnaire sent to paediatric endocrinologists of the Spanish Society of Paediatric Endocrinology. The questions were formulated based on the recommendations of "Clinical Practice Guidelines on the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity" issued by the Spanish Ministry of Health.

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Results: A total of 125 completed questionnaires were obtained from all Autonomous Communities. Variability was observed both in the number of patients attended and in the frequency of the visits. The majority (70%) of the paediatricians who responded did not have a dietitian, psychologist or psychiatrist, in their centre to share the treatment for obese children. As regards treatment, dietary advice is the most used, and 69% have never prescribed weight-loss drugs. Of those who have prescribed them, 52.6% did not use informed consent as a prior step to them being used.

Conclusions: There are few centres that comply with the recommendations of the clinical practice guidelines on prevention and treatment of childhood obesity as an established quality plan. Clinical practice differs widely among the paediatric endocrinologists surveyed. There are no uniform protocols of action, and in general there is limited availability of resources for the multidisciplinary treatment required by this condition.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

Obesidad;
Guía;
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Niño;
Adolescente

Estudio colaborativo español: descripción de la práctica clínica habitual en obesidad infantil

Resumen

Introducción: La obesidad infantil es un problema de salud de alta prevalencia. Aunque existen guías clínicas para su manejo, la variabilidad en su abordaje clínico es un hecho. El objetivo de este estudio es describir la práctica clínica habitual en unidades de Endocrinología Pediátrica y evaluar su adecuación a la guía recomendada.

Material y métodos: Se realizó un estudio observacional, transversal y descriptivo mediante encuesta a endocrinólogos infantiles de la Sociedad Española de Endocrinología Pediátrica. Las preguntas fueron formuladas en base a las recomendaciones de la «Guía de Práctica Clínica sobre la Prevención y el Tratamiento de la Obesidad Infantojuvenil» del Ministerio de Sanidad español.

Resultados: Se obtuvieron 125 encuestas de todas las Comunidades Autónomas. Se observó variabilidad en el número de pacientes atendidos al mes y en la frecuencia de las visitas. El 70% de los encuestados no dispone de un nutricionista ni de psicólogo o psiquiatra al que derivar los pacientes. En el tratamiento, las medidas dietéticas son las más empleadas; un 69% nunca ha prescrito fármacos para perder peso. De los que prescriben, el 52,6% no utilizan el consentimiento informado como paso previo a su empleo.

Conclusiones: Pocos centros cumplen las recomendaciones de la Guía de Práctica Clínica sobre la Prevención y el Tratamiento de la Obesidad Infantil en un plan de calidad establecido. La práctica clínica difiere mucho entre los endocrinólogos pediátricos encuestados, sin existir protocolos unificados de actuación, y con escasa disponibilidad de recursos para el tratamiento integral que precisa esta enfermedad.

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Introduction

The World Health Organization has labelled obesity as “the 21st century epidemic.” In recent decades, there has been a progressive increase in the prevalence of obesity with a negative impact on morbidity, mortality, quality of life and health care costs,^{1,2} and childhood obesity is associated with an increased risk of obesity in adulthood.^{3,4} Comorbidities may be present from the first years of life, and patients often present with several risk factors for cardiovascular disease.^{5,6} Furthermore, obese children use health care services more than children with normal weight.⁷ Therefore, preventive interventions must

be implemented at the family, school, health care and community levels to promote healthy lifestyle habits and behavioural changes in regards to diet and physical activity, along with the measures taken to manage obesity and its comorbidities.^{8–10}

While evidence-based guidelines and protocols for the management of childhood obesity have been developed, there is insufficient data on the challenges met in their implementation, which will vary by health care setting. The aim of our study was to describe the approach of paediatric endocrinologists to the clinical management of childhood obesity, with emphasis on differences in management between levels of care.

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