Online Self-Paced Modules to Reduce Weight Bias in Healthcare Professionals

Weight bias is defined as *"the negative attitudes and beliefs attributed to an individual based on their weight."*[1]

Background:

Experiencing weight bias :
- 2.5-3 times more likely to develop obesity or continue to have obesity[2]
- 60% increased risk of dying, regardless of BMI or other risk factors[3]

Healthcare professionals (HCPs):
- Are a common source of weight bias[4-10]
- Spend approximately 10 minutes less with patients with obesity[11]
- Recommend more procedures and lifestyle changes to patients with obesity[5,11]

Method:

- **Participants:** Healthcare professionals (n=7)
- **Recruitment:** Advertisements on social media
- **Setting:** Remote using Canvas
- **Intervention:** Educational self-paced online modules including information on obesity, weight bias, and ways to reduce weight bias
- **Data collection:**
  - Attitudes Toward Obese Person (ATOP) and Beliefs About Obese Persons (BAOP) surveys pre-and post-intervention
  - Intention to change current clinical practice
- **Statistical Analysis:** Wilcoxon signed rank test used to analysis sum median score pre- and post- ATOP and BAOP and descriptive statistics to measure intention to change

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Educational modules reduce weight bias in healthcare professionals.

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SCAN for contact information, link to the educational modules, and reference list

Results:

	ATOP	BAOP
W value (Wilcoxon statistics)	9	0
Z value at p=0.05	-1.8857	-2.0226
Statistical significance	Significant (p<0.05)	Significant (p<0.05)

The change of pre-and post ATOP and BAOP scores were both statistically significant.

Additionally, HCPs expressed having a more positive view on treating patients with obesity and an intent to change their current clinical practice.

Discussion:

The intervention shows an increase in positive beliefs and attitudes towards patients with obesity.

It is intended that having more positive attitudes and beliefs towards people with obesity will improve the quality of care provided. In return, these patients would be less inclined to cancel their preventative screenings and seek medical care when needed.

Experiencing weight bias increases the likelihood of having obesity and risk of dying, it is hopeful that decreasing weight bias will decrease such risks and health care costs associated.

The success of this project can translate into using online educational modules to reduce other types of bias.