



4TH WORLD CONGRESS ON INTERVENTIONAL THERAPIES FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES

HILTON MIDTOWN, NEW YORK CITY | APRIL 8-10, 2019

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



JOINT CONSENSUS CONFERENCE ON OBESITY STIGMA

Hosted by WCITD and jointly organized by the following scientific organizations:

- **American Diabetes Association (ADA)**
- **World Obesity Federation (WOF)**
- **The Obesity Society (TOS)**
- **European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO)**
- **American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE)**
- **Obesity Action Coalition (OAC)**
- **Diabetes UK**
- **American Association for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS)**
- **International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity (IFSO)**

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Mission

This initiative is designed to inform healthcare professionals, policy makers, and the public about the negative consequences of obesity bias, as well as the gap between scientific evidence and the myths and misconceptions that fuel stigma. The ultimate goal of this effort is to develop an agenda of educational and policy initiatives to end discrimination against people with obesity, facilitate access to care for those in need, and support investment in research to identify the elusive causes of obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Background

People with obesity face not only increased risk of serious medical complications but also a pervasive, resilient form of social stigma. Perceived – without evidence – as lazy, gluttonous, lacking will power and self-discipline, individuals suffering from obesity are often discriminated against in the workplace, education, and even by healthcare professionals.

Extensive research has shown that obesity stigma can cause significant harm to afflicted individuals. People who experience it suffer from both physical and psychological consequences, and they are less likely to seek and receive adequate care.

The damaging consequences of obesity stigma, however, extend beyond harm to individual victims. Despite scientific evidence to the contrary, the prevailing view in society is that obesity is a choice: a condition, rather than a disease, that can be reversed by voluntary decisions to eat less and exercise more. These assumptions mislead public health policies, confuse messages in popular media, undermine access to evidence-based treatments, and compromise advances in research. Consequently, diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes receive far less research

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TO IMPLEMENTATION

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funding than do other diseases, relative to their prevalence and the costs they impose upon society.

For all of the reasons above, weight stigma represents a major stumbling block in the fight against the pandemic of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Tackling stigma is not only a matter of human rights and social justice but also a way to advance prevention and treatment of these diseases.

Raising awareness of the negative consequences of stigma is important, but not sufficient to eradicate it. Putting aside longstanding preconceptions, changing widespread, deep-rooted beliefs and prevailing mind sets will require a new public narrative of obesity that is coherent with modern scientific knowledge.

Given the pervasiveness of obesity bias, this goal can only be achieved through concerted efforts of a broad group of stakeholders, including healthcare professionals, researchers, the media, policymakers, and the patients themselves.

Specific Aims

To develop a widely endorsed consensus statement/white paper designed to inform healthcare professionals, policymakers and the public about the causes and harms of obesity stigma

To raise awareness of the harmful consequences of obesity stigma for individuals and society

To explain the gap between scientific evidence and the myths and misconceptions that reinforce weight bias

To call for an end to discriminatory attitudes towards people based on their body weight status in the workplace, media, education, and healthcare

To engage policy makers, academic institutions, media, and other stakeholders in educational initiatives to explain the causes of obesity stigma and contribute to its eradication

To propose a novel narrative about obesity, coherent with scientific evidence and respectful to the rights of individuals afflicted with this disease

Endorsing Societies/Institutions:

In addition to the partnering organizations above (foundation sponsors), a broad group of additional professional organizations, academic institutions, scientific and medical journals, government agencies, and other stakeholders from around the world will be offered an opportunity to review the statement and endorse it.



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Outputs:

- Joint consensus statement/white paper to be published in scientific journals
- Executive summary for lay media
- Summary leaflet for policy makers and health insurers
- Summary leaflet for healthcare professionals
- Summary leaflets for schools and other academic institutions