

2022 KACO Posts

January

The New Measure for Severe Obesity

Last month, we talked about how obesity is a very heterogeneous disease. This month let's talk about *Severe Obesity*. The old term "morbid obesity" and the more recent "extreme obesity" were rather subjective, inaccurate and, occasionally, judgmental terms. We also used to define these advanced forms of obesity as greater than the 99thile BMI for age and gender. This measure was also not able to accurately describe patients who were in this most-populated BMI percentile.

Enter the new way of specifically defining and giving some descriptive insight, *Severe Obesity: Percent over BMI at the 95thile*. This measure is how medical and surgical obesity clinicians now determine what obesity management is indicated. To get this measure, use the following calculation: (Patient weight/weight at 95thile BMI for age & gender) X 100%

A number 120% or greater defines severe obesity. And the magnitude of that number helps determine management. Be looking for use of this number when the new AAP Obesity Clinical Practice Guideline is released in the near future.

February

The Roots of Toxic Stress

By now, we pediatricians are pretty fluent in the language of toxic stress and its importance on child health. California Surgeon General and pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris explains it better than anyone in this famous TED talk:

https://www.ted.com/speakers/nadine_burke_harris_1.

But most people are not aware that the discussion of adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress has its roots in obesity management. It was obesity clinician Dr. Vincent Felitti at Kaiser Permanente in San Diego and Dr. Robert Anda at CDC who made the connection in patients with obesity and the trauma they had experienced at a young age with health outcomes as adults. <https://acestoohigh.com/2012/05/23/toxic-stress-from-childhood-trauma-causes-obesity-too/>.

For those of us who are trying to help our patients with obesity, these connections speak to our need to understand our patients in totality from current diet patterns to earliest experiences.

March

It's Obesity Care Week: Sign Up to Show Your Support!

Welcome to Obesity Care Week which runs from Sunday, February 27 through Saturday, March 5. This week is designed to raise public awareness of obesity as a chronic illness and to state the importance of stamping out weight bias and stigma. You can do your part by signing up

here: <https://www.obesitycareweek.org/>. And by signing up, you can also get notifications on how you can help your patients who suffer from obesity.

July

Some Help from the Kentucky Legislature

Though some years the legislature has been rather cantankerous regarding pandemic mitigation, vaccines, transgender care, and institutional racism's effects on kids, the 2022 legislative session did provide a couple victories for kids regarding obesity treatment and prevention. First and most importantly, funding for mental health in schools has been expanded. As we know, the connection between behavioral health and obesity is strong. Also, the work of community health workers, important partners to pediatricians, has been made Medicaid billable. Lastly, schools have been granted flexibility in providing breakfast to students. A great place to follow legislative activities that affect our kids is at the website for The Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Children. The KY AAP is a member of this important statewide coalition: <https://www.kentuckyhealthychildren.org/>