

DEPRESSION, THE BDI AND PSYCHIATRIC ILLNESSES IN OBESE PATIENTS PRESENTING FOR BARIATRIC SURGERY

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Background

Mood disorders in obese individuals have been reported to be fairly common, with prevalence rates ranging from 19% to 58% in surgical studies. A recent study of bariatric surgery patients reported a lifetime prevalence of AXIS-I psychiatric illness in 66% of patients and current AXIS I disorder in 38. Depression is most commonly assessed in bariatric surgery patients using the BDI. Research has indicated that BDI scores of 12 or more are indicative of clinical depression

Aim

The initial aim was to characterize the prevalence and severity of depression and psychological illness in patients prior to surgery and to compare BDI scores with DSM-IV diagnosis of depression.

Method

Consecutive new patients at the Centre for Bariatric Surgery were invited to participate in the study. Patients were asked to complete a battery of psychological questionnaires and to attend a short interview session incorporating the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV.

Results

Approximately 45% of the patients met the criteria for an AXIS I disorder with mood disorders the most prevalent, accounting for 60%. Correlation of BDI scores with AXIS I diagnosis was acceptable however there was a considerable level of inaccuracy in the mild-moderate depression range of the BDI. Over half the patients scoring above the suggested cut-off of 12 had no SCID diagnosis of depression.

Conclusion

Current DSM-IV disorders are prevalent amongst bariatric surgery patients, in particular depression. The medical symptoms of obesity may be artificially inflating BDI scores in the mild range, inaccurately presenting an individual as exhibiting depressive symptomology.