

Chapter 1 Summary of findings

Objective:

The aim of this study was to determine whether there were any differences between obese binge-eaters and obese non-binge-eaters in terms of eating psychopathology, general psychiatric symptomatology, psychiatric diagnosis and quality of life among obese Chinese patients seeking outpatient weight management in Hong Kong.

Study design:

The study was a prospective clinical comparison of binge-eaters (BE) and non-binge-eaters (NBE) who participated in outpatient weight management program (WMP). The Cantonese-Chinese Interview version of the Eating Disorder Examination (CC-EDEI) was adopted to determine whether subjects were BE or not. A total of 33 subjects participated.

Several other instruments were used. Apart from defining the status of binge-eating, the CC-EDEI measured eating disorder psychopathology. The Hong Kong Chinese Version of the World Health Organization Quality of Life Measure (Abbreviated Version) (WHOQOL-BREF) measured different dimensions of quality of life. Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) measured the symptoms of anxiety and depression. The Chinese-Bilingual Structured Clinical Interview for Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV (Axis I, Patient version) (CB-SCID-I/P) was used to

establish current and life-time DSM-IV axis I diagnoses.

Results

24.24% and 75.76% of subjects were classified as BE and NBE respectively.

Concerning eating disorder psychopathology, BE showed significantly higher disturbance than NBE in terms of the global scale, eating, weight and shape concern, but not restraint subscale ($p < .05$), on the CC-EDEI. Regarding quality of life, BE differed significantly from NBE with reference to the impairment of psychological domain (global and cultural adjusted), but not physical, environment, or social domains ($p < .05$). In addition, BE showed significantly more depression and anxiety scores than NBE ($p < .05$). Moreover, 87.50% of BE, compared to 16.00% of NBE, met criteria for at least one DSM-IV mood or anxiety disorder ($p < .05$).

Conclusions

This study indicates that binge eating is likely to be a cross-culturally real disease entity. It confirms the Western findings that binge-eaters exhibited significantly more psychopathology and impairment of quality of life than non-binge-eaters among Chinese obese individuals seeking outpatient weight management. Being easily assessed, binge eating can serve as a clinically useful marker of psychopathology and impairment of quality of life. Both binge eating and general psychopathology are distressing and impairing. They may also exert adverse impacts on weight

management outcomes. It is worthwhile to screen routinely for binge eating among obese individuals seeking weight management. Public education and training of physicians on the nature and evaluation of binge eating is therefore highly advisable. Specifically, the treatment of binge eating and its associated psychopathology should become another goal of treatment in weight management programs in Hong Kong.

Keywords:

binge eating, obesity, psychopathology, Chinese