

# ASSESSING AWARENESS AND MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS WITH OBESITY AMONG PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION PHYSICIANS IN SPAIN: A PIONEER SURVEY STUDY

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## Background and Aims

Obesity is a chronic and multifactorial disease that significantly impacts the adult population, contributing to disability and leading to economic consequences. People with obesity have significantly lower number of disability free years, what leads to an increase demand of rehabilitation. AIM The aim of our survey is to analyze the current situation in Spain in relation to awareness and management of patients with obesity in the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PMR) services, as it has never been studied before in our county.

## Methods

In this cross-sectional study, an online survey was sent out from the Spanish Society of Rehabilitation (SERMEF) to their PRM members from May 1st to July 31st 2023. It was developed by the obesity working group and it included 22 questions. Data was collected in REDcap.

## Results

205 (10.07%) PRM physicians participated, half of them (n=102, 49.8%) worked with obese patients and 99% (n=201) considered obesity a disease. 52.2% (n=107) recognized that obesity influences functional prognosis of patients that receive rehabilitation treatment. However, 83.3% (n=184) considered that the facilities at their working areas were not adapted to the needs of obese patients, and only 9.8% (n=20) felt they had received enough training to asses properly this kind of patients. Only 21%(n=43) had an interdisciplinary unit to manage morbid obesity, and in those only half of the units had a PRM doctor who worked  $2 \pm 1.61$  hours/week.

## Conclusion

This study shows that despite PRM physicians are aware of the implications of obesity in functional outcomes, improvements in the management in hospitals of these patients including PRM departments are required. Multidisciplinary units for addressing obesity should be developed including PRM physicians to get better functional outcomes .

**Keywords:** obesity, Survey, facilities, exercise