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Spectrum Eating Disorder –An under Recognized Side of Obesity

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Obesity is a multi factorial disease at the intersection of environment, genetics, lifestyle, government policy, food availability, and socioeconomic factors. The healthcare cost of obesity has drawn attention and resources to addressing this disease, but this focus on obesity has distracted the community from considering the root causes of this disorder. The messages that have been sent by the healthcare professionals to overweight patients are frequently resulting in no change in behavior due to low awareness of the primary care physicians of the underlying causes of obesity and lack of training required to counsel patients to change lifestyle. Moreover, the prevailing emphasis on counting calories and macronutrient composition of the meals has not resulted in drops in obesity rates, and, in fact, quite the opposite became the norm. We are making the arguments that the reason for the failure of this approach is lack of recognition of the underlying eating disorders. We argue that a more effective approach could be developed if the emphasis be put on learning about the psychology of eating disorders and considering obesity as part of that spectrum. We propose steps to integration of trained dieticians nutritionists into the healthcare and adopting evidence-based practice in weight management that embraces both sides of the spectrum eating disorders: anorexia/bulimia and obesity, that will lead to recognizing the early symptoms of this spectrum disorder and developing effective treatments using multi-disciplinary approach. Case studies of successful management of lifestyle modification and use of technology to learn about and manage lifestyle of patients will be presented.

Biography:

Dr. Tsaion is a scientist and entrepreneur with focus on commercialization of technological innovations in safety assessment and translation of science innovations into public policy. She got her PhD in Nutritional Biochemistry at Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy. Her research was on the role of vitamin K-dependent protein in the aging nervous system. She spent most of her career developing and implementing safety assessment tools for pharmaceutical industry. Dr. Tsaion serves on the scientific review and advisory boards of a few technology companies and NIH. Her main research interests are in public health, knowledge translation and evidence-based methods in healthcare.