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OBESITY, SELF-ESTEEM AND SEXUALITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ABOUT 40 CASES

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Aim: To assess the impact of self-esteem on the sexuality of obese patients compared to a sample from the general population.

Patients and methods: A cross-sectional case-control study. It involved 40 obese married patients (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m2) and 40 normal weight subjects from the general population. A questionnaire was presented with sociodemographic data, somatic and psychiatric personal histories, data on obesity and sexual life data. Self-esteem was assessed using the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES).

Results: The sex-ratio (men/women) of obese patients was 0.53. The average BMI of obese patients was 33.48 kg/m2 (SD = 3.44). The score at the RSES in the obese group was 30.15 (SD = 5.48) versus 32.2 (SD = 4.58) in the control group, with no significant difference (p = 0.808). Among obese patients, the higher the score of self-esteem was, the more frequent sexual intercourses were, without significant difference (r = 0.254, p = 0.119). Sexual satisfaction was significantly correlated with the level of self-esteem (p = 0.022). Obese people with low self-esteem were more likely to have a decrease in sexual desire (OR = 9.625, CI [1.378, 67.246]).

Conclusion: There is a link between low self-esteem of obese and an alteration of the quality of their sexual life. The therapist should check the level of self-esteem in obese patients and try to improve it. In this sense, the collaboration of the endocrinologist with the psychiatrist could be very useful.

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