

Cystic Fibrosis Research News

Title:

A paradigm shift in cystic fibrosis nutritional care: clinicians' views on the management of patients with overweight and obesity

Lay Title:

What do dietitians, doctors and physiotherapists think about the management of people with CF who are living with overweight and obesity?

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What was your research question?

How are clinicians approaching the management of adults with CF who are living with overweight and obesity?

Why is this important?

We know that 30-40% of adults with cystic fibrosis are now living with overweight and obesity. We need to know more about how to help people with CF to keep their weight within the healthy range. This is important because we know from people with other lung conditions that excess weight can be bad for lung function. As people with CF get older excess weight might affect their heart health too. We would like to understand more about how CF clinicians are approaching this issue and what challenges they face helping people with CF to manage their weight.

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What did you do?

We interviewed twenty clinicians (6 physiotherapists, 8 dietitians and 6 doctors) working in 15 different CF centres from around the United Kingdom. We asked them questions about how they approached the management of people with CF who have a BMI above the healthy range (classified as having overweight or obesity). We also asked them what they thought the best way to help people with CF who wanted to lose weight. We questioned their understanding of the options available for helping people to control their weight and what would be acceptable and feasible for people with cystic fibrosis.

What did you find?

- Clinicians found it difficult to start a conversation about excess weight gain and worried about upsetting people who might not want to talk about the issue.
- Clinicians felt people with CF were used to eating a high energy diet and may find it hard to change these dietary habits when they no longer needed to eat this way.
- Clinicians wanted research on the impact of excess weight on the health of people with CF before they decided if people with CF should be encouraged to lose weight.
- Finding a safe, effective, and acceptable weight management treatment for people with CF may be complex.

What does this mean and reasons for caution?

These views were only from a small group of clinicians in the UK, and this does not tell us about the experiences of clinicians working in CF centres in different countries. We need to think carefully about how to assess people with CF who have a BMI above the healthy range and how to discuss this with them. Existing weight management programmes might need to be adapted to make them suitable for people with CF. We also need to interview people living with CF to find out what they think about this issue and how it should be addressed.

What's next?

Treatment interventions to help people lose weight will need to be carefully designed with people who have CF. We are now designing a feasibility trial of an adapted weight management intervention to see if it is safe and acceptable to people with CF.



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