

Obesity Conference; Understanding of psychological aspects of obese patients are essential for good follow-up after bariatric surgery

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The pre- and post-operative management of bariatric surgery patients is multidisciplinary. Especially, physician should be responsible for the treatment of obesity, nutrition, risk factors and complications for the long-term follow-up together with nutritionist and nurse. On the other hand, it is also essential to understand the psychological aspects for good follow-up after bariatric surgery. Because bariatric surgery requires a considerable change in eating behaviors and patients will experience psychosocial change post-operatively.

Our institution holds a monthly “Obesity Conference” for more than 15 years. It is the multidisciplinary case conference and consists of not only physicians, nutritionists, nurse and physiotherapists, but also psychiatrist and clinical psychologists. Since 2010, our team has invited surgeons and has become a bariatric surgery multidisciplinary one. A highlight of the conference is to discuss the findings from interview, intelligence test and psychological test such as Rorschach Test (Comprehensive System) and Egogram performed by Mental-health professionals. We first understand and sympathize with the patient’s familial social background, past history, psychological stress and psychic reality as much as possible. Subsequently, we evaluate the personality traits and whether the patient has mental disorder and/or eating disorder. Then, the comprehensive strategy for follow-up after bariatric surgery is discussed and consented. In our team, physician mainly coordinates the conference and pre- and post-operative management including mental-health.

Our conference established a “high lambda” personality (Rorschach Test), which was highly detected in Japanese severe obese patients. High lambda is characterized as avoidance of complexity and the patients are often resistant against their behavior modification. To understand this personality is helpful to predict their “dropout” after bariatric surgery.

Understanding of “patient” with psychological aspects is essential to success in bariatric surgery. Obesity Conference must improve to popularize such an excellent bariatric surgery in Japan and to make more obese patients happy with the surgery!