



Discrimination and Bias Towards Obese Patients

Dr. Charles Shaffer

Over the years, I have noticed there is a stigma towards obese individuals. Not only does this stigma come from family, friends, and even strangers, but from physicians as well. The Weigh Station receives numerous referrals from physicians to take care of their obese patients, many times because they do not care to deal with their patients complaints.

Obese individuals are vulnerable to weight bias from their healthcare providers. These providers include physicians, nurses, dietitians, psychologists, and even medical students. Self-reported studies from health professionals noted many professionals viewed the obese population as lazy, unsuccessful, unintelligent, and weak-willed. The causes of obesity may reinforce these negative attitudes.

As multiple research studies assess weight loss bias among health professionals, one group of psychologists were randomly assigned 102 conditions.

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The health providers must read about the conditions and assign them to patients who were either obese or of normal weight. The patients' descriptions were identical except for their body mass. Psychologists frequently assigned negative attributes, severe psychological symptoms, and more pathology to the morbidly obese than those of normal weight.

Negative attitudes and perceptions raise concerns about the quality of healthcare given to obese patients. A recent study documents that obese people will delay pelvic exams, mammograms, and other preventive screenings due to the relationship between them and their health provider. Five hundred obese women asked their providers medical office if they are able to delay or cancel their appointment with their main reason being they fear the judgement they may receive.

The bias against overweight and obese individuals are noticeable in employers as well. Overweight employees are seen as sloppy, lazy, less competent, disagreeable, and emotionally unstable. A study found that of three thousand overweight adult women, 54% of them reported experiencing weight bias from coworkers and 38% stated they had been called demeaning names that were relevant to their weight.

Bias is typically established early in childhood, which sets the stage for teasing and peer rejection. It was found that preschoolers tend to describe their overweight peers as mean, lazy, and stupid. Additionally, these children typically lacked many friends. High school students described their obese classmates as unclean and lazy.

Ultimately, weight bias is rampant throughout society, especially at school and places of employment. It is a clear and powerful implication for emotional loss. Education is critical to curb this bias. Additionally, in order for us to help aid your journey, we ask that you be honest with us about your emotional and mental states regarding others attitudes towards you. This helps us learn more about you and how we can best help you.

Blessings,
Chuck Shaffer MD

The Recipe of the Month

BBQ Dry Rub

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon coarse ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons Stevia
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder



Directions

Mix ingredients together and store in an airtight container. Rub meat thoroughly with mixture several hours before using.



**Smoky, Easy,
Savory.**