



WEIGHT LOSS / EATING HABITS

Failing to Address the Needs of Your Overweight Patients

Editorial Staff

A [recent survey](#) revealed that the vast majority (80 percent) of chiropractors believe at least half of their patients are overweight, and 45 percent believe at least a quarter of their patients are obese. However, half of DCs find it difficult (43 percent) or very difficult (7 percent) to talk with patients about weight management. Subsequently, only 15 percent of chiropractors consistently talk to their overweight patients about weight management.

DCs are in agreement regarding the negative impact being overweight has on spinal health (99 percent) and overall health (100 percent), as well as the need to educate patients more about healthy eating (93 percent) and offer a weight management program (80 percent).

However, they are split almost evenly on whether their patients should be taking some kind of weight management product; whether they have effective weight management products to offer; and whether their overweight patients would pay for an effective weight management program.

The survey also found that more than a third (37 percent) of doctors who find it difficult to talk with their patients have those conversations "seldom" (29 percent), "almost never" (4 percent) or "wait for patients to bring it up" (4 percent). Those same DCs are also less likely to offer a weight loss / detox system compared to all respondents (27 percent vs. 33 percent). Many also find their recommendations are less effective: 28 percent "somewhat ineffective" and 14 percent "not effective."



On the other hand, chiropractors who *do* offer a weight loss / detox system are more likely to feel more comfortable starting weight management conversations, consistently have those conversations and believe that their recommendations are very effective (27 percent) or effective (63 percent).

While many DCs don't consider weight management a core component of chiropractic practice, it is having a greater impact on spinal health and general health; and a greater percentage of the U.S. population, particularly children, is becoming more overweight. The challenge for doctors without effective weight management programs is that they are less likely to have weight-loss conversations with their patients and less likely to believe their recommendations are effective.

Doctors of chiropractic will want to consider what role they need to play in their patients' weight management challenges. DCs without effective weight management programs should investigate nondrug solutions for their patients and expand their ability to contribute to patients' lifelong health and wellness.

Editor's Note: Complete survey results are available [here](#).

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