

Social support for people with morbid obesity in a bariatric surgery programme: A qualitative descriptive study

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Abstract

Background—Morbid obesity (MO) is a chronic metabolic disease affecting physical, psychological and social wellbeing. Bariatric surgery is a reliable method for losing weight in the long term, improving the quality of life, body image and social life of people with MO. Current literature recognises the importance of social support in controlling weight and coping with MO. The objective of this study was to describe and understand experiences related to social support for patients with MO included in a bariatric surgery programme. **Methods**—A qualitative descriptive study, where data collection included thirty-one interviews with people diagnosed with MO involved in a bariatric surgery programme. **Results**—Three main themes emerged from the analysis: (1) accepting the problem in order to ask for help, (2) the need for close support and (3) professional support: opposing feelings. **Conclusions**—A partner, family and friends are the key pillars of social support for those with MO included in a bariatric surgery programme. Healthcare professionals gave formal support; the bariatric surgery team provided information, trust and assurance. Nurses provided healthcare 24 h a day, making them the main formal support for people in the bariatric surgery programme. © 2021 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

Author keywords

Bariatric surgery; Morbid obesity; Qualitative study; Social support