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Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society of India unveils guidelines for obesity management

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Guidelines can play a role in reducing the stigma associated with obesity



Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society of India (OSSI), the largest association of surgeons and integrated health members addressing obesity, has announced the release of comprehensive guidelines for the 'management of obesity'.

These guidelines are a crucial response to the rising concerns around obesity in the Indian population and aim to mitigate the prevailing confusion in obesity management. These were compiled by Dr Aparna Govil Bhasker and approved by the immediate Past President- Dr Praveen Raj, President- Dr Randeep Wadhawan and the executive committee of OSSI 2022-24.

According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), between 2019 and 2021, approximately 6.4% of women and 4.0% of men aged 15-49 in India are living with obesity. The direct healthcare cost associated with obesity in India is estimated to reach a staggering $8.43 billion, covering medical expenses directly related to obesity and its associated health conditions.

The OSSI guidelines provide a treatment matrix based on the grade of obesity, assisting healthcare providers in making informed decisions for tailored interventions. The approach recognises the complexities and risks associated with different grades of obesity, optimizing outcomes and improving overall management.

For instance, pharmacotherapy (anti-obesity/weight loss medications) or endoscopic bariatric procedures like intra-gastric balloon or endoscopic sleeve gastroplasty (ESG); along with diet and lifestyle modification can be advised as a primary treatment option for individuals who have not attained ? 5% loss of their baseline weight despite undergoing 6 months of diet and lifestyle interventions or are developing obesity-related co-morbidities despite diet and lifestyle modification.

As per the guidelines of OSSI, bariatric/metabolic surgery is recommended as a primary treatment option for obesity for patients with a BMI ? 35 Kg/m^2, with/without the presence of any obesity-related co-morbidity.

Dr Praveen Raj said**, "**Guidelines contribute to the efficient functioning of the healthcare system by providing a clear roadmap for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up. This can lead to better resource allocation, reduced healthcare costs, and improved overall system efficiency".