

Session 4: Best Ways Going Forward

Introductory Comments

Moderator: Nico Pronk

Panelists: Bryn Austin

Craig Hales

Michael Knight

Obesity and Body Mass Index...

- A risk factor per se is not a disease
- When obesity is defined as a disease, it can have negative consequences or ramifications (bias, stigma, etc.) for people with excess weight
 - Despite excess weight, some people
 - Appear healthy
 - Show no limitations in activities of daily living
 - Have no clinical symptoms associated with disease
- The impact of this broad characterization of obesity as a disease based on BMI alone makes it a socially and financially intractable issue

Yet,...

- Evidence shows obesity is associated with
 - Distinct pathophysiological alterations of tissues and organs
 - Discrete clinical signs and symptoms
 - Increased risk of secondary complications
 - Restrictions of daily activities and mobility
 - Strongly associated with diverse increasing disease burdens (multimorbidity)
 - An important focus for multimorbidity prevention
- When obesity is defined as a disease, it establishes legitimacy for medical treatment, increased access for treatment and care, and may reduce weight-related bias and stigma

Obesity and BMI...Moving Forward

- Clarity of why to measure and what measurement to use
 - Improvement or treatment
 - Decision-making
 - Accountability
 - Surveillance and research
- Need to pay greater attention to the framing of obesity
 - Context
 - Measures
 - Lived experience