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Regional Perspectives Deep Dive: Europe

Announcer:

Welcome to CME on ReachMD. This episode is part of our MinuteCE curriculum.

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Dr. Ciudin:

This is CME on ReachMD. I'm Dr. Andreea Ciudin, and I have here with me today Marta Comas.

Marta, I would like to have a brief discussion with you about the current perspectives, regional perspectives in the obesity diagnosis and management with a special focus on Europe, because this is where we are living. So please, what are your thoughts on this?

Dr. Comas:

Okay, I'm going to talk about a few themes here about Europe and obesity. Currently, we know obesity is not recognized as a disease in many countries in Europe. As far as we know, only is recognized in Portugal. One of the original needs we have here is to educate population at both the health and community levels on issues regarding obesity as a disease and to avoid a stigmatization.

Currently, the prevalence of obesity in Europe is around 30%-31% in adults and 29% in childhood. To diagnose obesity is needed a multidisciplinary team and an integrative view of the disease. Having shared decision-making protocols helps us to empower patients so they can be involved in management and in their disease. And they better understand the treatments and procedures, as well as facilitating means of communication to resolve doubts.

We have cultural differences here in Europe, like different kind of diet patterns, difference in schedules and timetables, different beliefs. But nowadays we have many therapies to treat obesity, like, for example, the new obesity management medications, bariatric surgery, lifestyle interventions like diets, exercise, psychological therapies.

So here in Europe, we've got some guidelines for clinical practice. The main of it we have is the other framework at a European level. And in the different countries, we've got national guidelines, like the new guidelines in Spain or in Ireland, but they are guidelines for adults. We have a gap in update guidelines in childhood here in Europe. So call to action here is both healthcare professionals and people living with obesity need to work together to recognize obesity as a disease.

I don't know what you think about, Andreea?

Dr. Ciudin:

Thank you, Marta. Actually, you made some very good points that as key messages we should say that despite of the large amount of evidence on the pathophysiology of obesity as a biological disease, as you mentioned, in most of the European countries is still not recognized as a disease. Therefore, the direct consequence of this fact is that there is no national plan for the management of obesity at the European level. Actually, most of the national plans focus on prevention, mainly on lifestyle habits and diet, but not on the management of obesity as a disease. And I think, and you agree, that this is a very important gap to be filled.

And also, as you mentioned, childhood obesity is not always taken into the account. And there are many gaps also there to be filled because the national guidelines are old; they need to be updated. We start to have some very important guidelines at European-level sites such as the EASO framework on the new diagnosis of obesity, but there is still so much work to be done.

So I think that the call for action is very, very important, and we have to build the road together, both healthcare providers and patients, to start to make the work to recognize obesity as a disease at European level. As far as I know, in Europe, only Portugal has managed to recognize obesity as a disease. So I think that there's a lot of work to do for everybody.

What do you think?

Dr. Comas:

Totally, according to you, yeah.

Dr. Ciudin:

Well, thank you, Marta. It's been a great discussion, but our time is up for today. So thank you all for listening and for joining. Bye-bye.

Dr. Comas:

Thank you.

Announcer:

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