Author's response to reviews

Title: Obese Older Adults Report High Satisfaction and Positive Experiences with Care

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Responses to Associate Editor’s comments:

i) consider to change the title to "..positive experiences with care...".

Author response: Title was updated.

ii) introduction: you write that obese patients often report bias in attitudes and treatment - please elaborate and also consider whether this point should be taken up in the Discussion;

Author response: Details about bias was added to the introduction.

iii) please state hypotheses in the end of the Discussion;

Author response: Revised to read: “Therefore, consistent with our hypothesis, the present study adds to the literature that obesity, independent of other factors controlled for in this study, has a positive impact on satisfaction and positive experiences with care in older adults, likely due to increased attentiveness to care.”

iv) please include one paragraph about data collection in the Methods:

Author response: a paragraph entitled “Data collection” was added.

v) discussion, page 14: please elaborate on the "other unforeseen/uncontrolled factors" - could it also be other unforeseen/uncontrolled factors related to the obese group? (ref your mention in the introduction regarding bias relating to obese patients);

Author response: Revised to read: “Lastly, in addition to attentiveness to care, the increased satisfaction in these individuals might be explained by other unforeseen/uncontrolled factors such as other comorbid conditions, familiarity with the health care system or even favorable or misconstrued bias associated with obese individuals.”

vi: the conclusion part of the Discussion should be more closely related to the study topic (use the abstract as a starting point);

Author response: The conclusion part of the discussion was rewritten.

vii) tables: a) table 2: delete "...and after" from the table title, if this is before adjustment; b) table 3: please include confidence intervals for odds ratios. Ideally I would also like to see ORs for the other variables, at least some mention of effect sizes for other variables in the Result section.

Author response: Table 2: “and after” was deleted. This was a carry-over from when we showed the after adjustment data before a reviewer requested we delete from Table 2.

Table 3: please add confidence intervals

Author response: these were added to Table 3.
Referee 1:

Minor Essential Revisions:

1) I would suggest making clear what the response rate is before evaluating it. Now, the response rate is evaluated on page 8 in the third paragraph, before the reader is informed about the response rate in numbers. The response rate in numbers is the presented on page 10. Please inform the reader about what the response is first, and then evaluate it.

Author response: This was moved to the Data collection section on page 7.

2) On page 6 in the first paragraph, it should be: "Therefore, in the present study, we attempt to estimate the independent impact of obesity on satisfaction and experience with care in older adults, …"

Author response: The text was revised.

3) Should it be "Additionally, the percentage of obese individuals 65 or older in our study was less than that of the United States a population at large…” rather than "at population at large" on page 13 first sentence in first paragraph?

Author response: The text was revised.

4) Still, on page 13, second paragraph, it should be "The present study is unique…".

Author response: The text was revised.

5) On page 14 in the first paragraph it should be "Increased attentiveness is evident in our study by the self-reported,..".

Author response: The text was revised.

Referee 2:

Minor essential revisions

1. p6, line 7 - "we attempt to estimate the independent impact OF obesity" – word in caps is missing from manuscript

Author response: corrected.

2. p10 - "The most common comorbid condition was high blood pressure, followed by arthritis of a joint/osteoporosis, diabetes and low back pain, which increased with each BMI category
with that of the entire study population falling somewhere between the normal weight and overweight categories (Figure 1)". This sentence needs revision. Firstly, 'increased with each BMI category' doesn't appear to be true for low-back pain. Secondly, the latter part of the sentence ("with that of the entire study population falling somewhere between the normal weight and overweight categories") doesn't make sense and needs rewording.

Author response: The figure and text were revised. Pain was removed from the figure.

3. p11. "Obese survey respondents also reported that doctors WERE ALSO more often prescribed checking their blood pressure regularly" - words in caps should be deleted

Author response: done.

4. p13 end of first para - "which likely attributed to some of these differences" implies causation in the wrong order. Replacing "attributed" with "led" would improve clarity.

Author response: done.

5. p13 end of second para - "this stigmatism is especially true of younger, obese adults, which may explain the differences seen on older, obese adults [39-43]. Therefore, age is an important factor affecting satisfaction in obese individuals, explaining the discrepancy between studies on satisfaction in obese individuals". As per earlier review, the point about stigma is interesting but its possible role a mechanism for an age/obesity interaction re: satisfaction could be more clearly elaborated. I would suggest:

a) explicitly noting that the consequences of stigma that are listed – eg "disparities in gaining employment, social rejection, negative stereotypes and reduced access to healthcare" - are also associated with poorer health care experiences.

b) Revising the last sentence of this para to read "This may go some way to explaining the age differences observed in studies on satisfaction in obese individuals".

Author response: the paragraph was revised. … care “(all of which are associated with poorer health outcomes)”…and… “This may help explain the differences in results of studies on obesity and satisfaction seen across different ages.”

p6. p15. "Programs that take a more holistic approach to managing health by focusing on achieving optimal quality of life and living a healthy lifestyle are needed". It is odd that quality of life is mentioned only twice in the manuscript - once in the first para of the introduction and again in the last line of the conclusions. The rest of the paper does not discuss QoL so a call to focus on it in the conclusions does not appear justified. The conclusions section of the abstract is more appropriate.

Author response: QOL was removed. It should have read quality of care.
Referee 3:

Minor essential revisions

1) p.5: It seems that the section starting with “The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS)” would be better suited in the method section.

Author response: The paragraph was moved to the methods.

2) Study population (p.6): “an estimated 49 million Americans in 2011”: it would be helpful to additionally indicate how many percent of Americans this reflects.

Author response: The following text was added: “Medicare is the primary insurer for nearly all Americans 65 years or older (about 15% of the country). Medicare also covers those with certain disabilities and/or end stage renal disease regardless of age.”

3) p.10: “After excluding those without BMI information, there were 18,192 eligible respondents included in this analysis.” Include percentage of excluded respondents.

Author response: This was added.

4) Limitations: The study includes only adults older than 65. This is a limitation as age differences in the relationship between obesity and satisfaction are concluded in relationship to other studies.

Author response: We focused on this age group, as almost all are on Medicare, the data of which is available, so it is a natural cutoff.

5) General: manuscript has several typos. For example:

P. 13: “The present study in unique” should read “the present study is unique”

P. 6: “the independent impact obesity on satisfaction and” should read “independent impact of obesity”

Author response: These were revised.