

INVESTIGATION OF HEALTH LITERACY LEVELS IN PATIENTS APPLYING TO OBESITY CENTER

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: Obesity is a chronic disease that develops through the interaction of metabolic, genetic, sociocultural and behavioral factors. The term “Health Literacy” is defined as the use and understanding of information that will improve health and the skills that affect individuals’ access to health services. Health literacy may be important in the awareness and treatment of obesity. The aim of our study is to measure the health literacy levels of obese individuals.

METHODS: Our research is a descriptive and cross-sectional study conducted with individuals over the age of 18, with a body mass index ≥ 30 kg/m², who applied to Etlik City Hospital Obesity Center between August-December 2024, were informed about the research, agreed to participate, and gave informed consent (ethics committee approval date 14.08.2024 and decision number AEŞH-BADEK-2024-659). Individuals were given a form that evaluated their sociodemographic information, Turkey Health Literacy Survey-32 (TSOY-32), and mental status examinations were performed.

RESULTS: Of the participants included in the study, 82.3% (n=191) were female and 38.8% (n=90) were high school graduates, 49.1% (n=114) were unemployed, 68.5% (n=159) were married, 61.2% (n=142) had known comorbidities, and 69.8% (n=162) were in the BMI>40 group. In the general score, 3.0% (n=7) of the participants had insufficient (0-25), 23.7% (n=55) problematic- limited (26-33), 47.8% (n=111) sufficient (34-42), 24.6% (n=57) excellent (43-50) health literacy levels. In the health care domain score, 2.2% (n=5) of the participants had insufficient, 12.9% (n=30) problematic-limited, 57.3% (n=133) sufficient, 26.3% (n=61) excellent levels. In the disease prevention and health promotion domain score, 6.9% (n=16) of the participants had insufficient, 9.1% (n=21) had problematic-limited, 43.5% (n=101) had sufficient, and 29.3% (n=68) had excellent levels.

CONCLUSIONS: Identifying the psychological and individual factors associated with obesity, and increasing health literacy can contribute to a more efficient, permanent and sustainable weight loss process for obese patients.

Keywords: Health literacy, obesity, treatment