



2017 ASO Best Abstract Award



Sandra is a health psychologist with research interests in chronic disease management and smoking cessation. She completed her doctorate in health psychology at the University of the West of England in Bristol, UK. She has previously worked in the National Health Service (NHS) as a primary care and mental health researcher, an assistant psychologist and in research governance. She has also delivered consultancy work developing tailored stress management interventions within organisations and group settings. Alongside her research work, Sandra works as a general advisor for the London Research Design Service team based at Queen Mary University. This role involves supporting health professionals and research teams within the North East London area to develop their research ideas into full funding applications to the NIHR and other peer reviewed funders.

Post-surgical cliff after bariatric surgery: accounts of patients and their health care practitioners

Sandra Jumbe¹, Jane Meyrick², Diana Harcourt²

¹Queen Mary University of London, London, United Kingdom, ²University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom

The superiority of bariatric surgery for improving medical outcomes in severe obesity when compared to other weight loss interventions remains undisputed. However, knowledge about the psychological impact of the procedure on people's lives is limited. Systematic reviews consistently show persisting disordered psychosocial wellbeing postoperatively when compared to control groups, especially after long-term monitoring, suggesting need for psychological support and longer term postoperative psychological outcomes research. Literature also infers limited understanding regarding the postoperative patient lived experience. This may form a barrier in health practitioners' understanding of this patient group's ongoing needs. This study aimed to capture patients and practitioners' postoperative accounts of bariatric surgery, exploring concordance between the two groups to gauge awareness of patients' subsequent health needs.

Methodology: Ten individuals who had bariatric surgery two or more years ago and eight bariatric surgery practitioners were recruited within the NHS and individually interviewed by the researcher. The audiorecorded interviews were transcribed and examined using thematic analysis.

Findings: Thematic analysis of the interviews elicited 'postsurgical cliffs in patient care' which permeated through three themes; (1) navigating health changes (2) contrasting perspectives and (3) perceived prejudice. Participants reported unmet needs; psychological support to facilitate adjustment to physical and psychological changes, excess skin and accepting non-obese self. Impact of differing views of success between patients and professionals on postoperative care were highlighted.

Conclusion: Bariatric surgery is a great weight loss catalyst for severe obesity. However, lack of psychological aftercare may threaten long-term health outcomes. Recommendations from a health psychology perspective are given.