
Study: Higher Prevalence of Obesity in ICU



An audit from an Australian ICU found that around three-quarters of patients were overweight or obese, around 12 percent higher than the percentage in the general population. The findings have implications for training and healthcare costs, say the authors. The article is in press in [Intensive and Critical Care Nursing](#).

Diane M. Dennis from the ICU at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital in Perth, Australia and Michelle Trevenen from the Centre for Applied Statistics, Department of Research at the University of Western Australia carried out an observational case note audit of 230 ICU patients admitted to the 28-bed ICU at the Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital between November 2012 and August 2013.

Findings

Of the patients admitted during this period, 230 had their BMI recorded (weighed by a nurse and with height measured by a physiotherapist for ventilation purposes). 83 patients were overweight and 90 were obese. The authors estimate that this rate meant an estimated additional 5279 unanticipated overweight or obese ICU patients at their ICU during 2013. Their analysis also showed that no medical specialty was particularly associated with high BMI. As the study was about a single site with BMI data from 21% of patients admitted during the study period, they recommend future studies with larger numbers and to include data relating to ICU-specific outcomes.

Dennis and Trevenen conclude that staffing ratios and equipment resources as well as training should be taken into consideration to manage overweight and obese patients. They acknowledge the challenges in measuring comparative costs of patients with normal BMI versus high BMI.

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