

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

BEST OF ECO FORUM, ISTANBUL



The Best of ECO 2019, a scientific forum, was held under the patronage of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) in Istanbul on 19 - 20 October, 2019. The European Congress on Obesity (ECO) took place on the turn of April and May 2019 in Glasgow and there were delivered a lot of interesting presentations. The most interesting of them were then presented at the scientific forum in Istanbul. The best European obesity specialists discoursed on obesity problems there. More than 80 specialists mostly from Europe but also from India or Lebanon participated in this forum. The Czech Republic was represented by 4 obesity specialists. Within two days, there were delivered about 20 oral presentations including presentations of pharmaceutical companies.

The program of the forum included all problems linked to obesity. In the first presentation, Dr. Abd Tahrani, a specialist in endocrinology from the University of London, described obesity as a chronic multi-factorial disease. He pointed out the lesser known fact that with reduction of the body weight the energy output in patients is decreasing. In the survey of current knowledge on obesity he also mentioned the relationship between watching TV and physical activity, especially in child patients.

Dr. Jason Halford from the University of Liverpool presented British data on the prevalence of obesity. In 1993 the prevalence of obesity in Great Britain was 15 %, since then till 2018 it increased up to 29 %. In accord with the last works he pointed out a known fact that the increase in obesity is related to social and economic situation of the patients. According to the author, TV viewing or increased using of electric means of transport (bikes, scooters) are contributing factors to the increase in obesity as well. J. Halford also expressed his opinion that 95 % of British children watch TV more than 14 hours a week. He emphasized a bad impact of social media

influencers and TV media promoting unhealthy food. It was also confirmed a well-known fact that the risk periods in life for gaining excess body weight are not only a job change, but also a wedding, birth of children, or stop to cigarettes.

The lecture by Dr. Ramos – Salas from the University of Kristianstad in Sweden dealt with the problems of obesity management from the psychological and behavioral point of view. In accord with current works it was confirmed that with increased appetite the production of the hormones leptin and glucagon-like peptide is decreasing, but the production of ghrelin is increasing. The well known link between stress factors and appetite was proved as well.

Dr. Barbara Mc Govan, a specialist in endocrinology from St. Thomas' Hospital in London, confirmed in her presentation that the waist circumference significantly correlates with the amount of total body fat. The BMI value is considered the gold standard in anthropometry in obese patients, but we have to take into account differences between the Asian and European populations which differ in the values of BMI, waist circumference, or total body fat percentage. The norm of waist circumference in men in Asia is 90 cm and less. The lecturer also emphasized the importance of the hormone leptin in reducing the body weight.

The first speaker concerning the lectures on obesity management was Dr. Abd Tahrani. He reviewed all the known basic pillars of obesity treatment. He stated again that the reduction of body weight by 5 – 10 % leads to a significant decrease in comorbidities of obesity. The last data show that it is possible to reduce the body weight max. by 15 % by using regimen methods and pharmacological treatment. Bigger weight losses are possible only by using bariatric surgery. Current European Guidelines for Obesity Management are in accord with recommended guidelines of the Czech Association for the Study of Obesity.

Dr. Carl Roberts from the University of Liverpool transparently presented currently well-known anti-obesity drugs. On the European market there are available orlistat, to a limited extent phentermine, combination of naltrexone/ bupropion and since 2018 liraglutide. On the American market, besides the above mentioned ones, there are also available a combination of phentermine/topiramate and lorcaserine. The future in obesity management is considered to be in centrally acting medicaments. A new drug on the market is semaglutide at present.

Dr. Gerhard Prager, a surgeon from the University Hospital of Vienna, presented indications for bariatric operations. In accord with the cited works, he confirmed that sleeve gastrectomy is the most common technique currently used in bariatric surgery. Gastric bypass is the second most common type of bariatric surgery. On the other hand, adjustable gastric band as the next bariatric procedure is on the decline. Current European Guidelines for Surgical Obesity Management are in accord with recommended guidelines of the Czech Association for the Study of Obesity.

Dr. Alex Miras from the Istanbul University had a lecture on options in treatment of obese diabetics. He emphasized not only the importance of new central anti-obesity drugs (liraglutide, semaglutide), but also the importance of bariatric surgery which is considered to be the gold standard in obese patients with BMI over 40.

Dr. V. Pavlík from the Faculty of Military Health Sciences in Hradec Králové pointed out in the panel discussion that phentermine which is approved as a central anti-obesity drug by the Czech Association for the Study of Obesity is unlike other EU member states still available in the Czech Republic. He also shortly mentioned prevalence of overweight and obesity in the Czech Republic and in the Czech Armed Forces (ACR). In 2017 waist circumference measurement was legislated in the ACR because it diagnoses obesity in soldiers with higher muscle mass better than the BMI value. Dr. Pavlík presented the obesity prevention and management project in the ACR within the years 2013 and 2015. At that time obese soldiers were given two types of anti-obesity drugs free of charge (phentermine and orlistat). The body weight in these soldiers were reduced by 6 kg in three months. He emphasized the importance of physical activity within primary prevention of obesity and above-standard-level options of obesity prevention in the ACR where physical activity is compulsory within working hours. Regular annual health checkups are compulsory for soldiers as well. As for comments from foreign civilian participants within the discussion it was obvious that such preventive options concerning obesity management are not available in the foreign civilian sector.

All the presentations were followed by plentiful discussions to particular topics. All participants were satisfied not only with the program of the forum, but also with accompanying social events. Hopefully the next European and International Congress on Obesity which will be held in May 2020 in Dublin will be even more successful.



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