

Psycho-Social approach by the social worker for bariatric patients in Japan. / A model to ensure the success of bariatric surgery

Tetsuya Nakazato

Yotsuya Medical Cube

Morbid obesity is a new but rapidly increasing social problem in Japan. More than 200 patients have underwent bariatric surgery since 2006 at Yotsuya Medical Cube.

We have organized the multidisciplinary Team which consists of surgeons, a nutritionist, a pharmacist, nurses, and a social worker. The team approach plays an important role in the success of treatment for bariatric patients. In this approach, the social worker is in charge of the psycho-social support for patients. For example, there are two kinds of psycho-educational groups organized by the social worker: 1) Pre-surgery orientation group with post-surgery patients as supporters every Wednesday and Thursday; 2) Post-surgery patient group meeting every December, the counseling has also been provided on individual basis as well as in group settings for pre-surgery and post-surgery patients.

As social work is a profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives,, social workers are in an important position to help bariatric patients by helping them cope with and solve issues in their everyday lives, such as family and personal problems, relationships, and social problems. Therefore, as the patients can focus on their physical problems and treatment, this intervention has lead to the success of bariatric surgery in our hospital.

I will speak about effects of the social worker intervention for bariatric patients with my experiences and research.