

Exploring The Current State of Weight Bias and Fat Shaming in the Healthcare System

From the Perspective of a Physician and Patient

The Toronto Chapter of the Canadian Obesity Network (CON-YYZ) tackled the pervasive, yet often not talked about, topic of weight bias and fat shaming, at a networking event on April 5th 2017, at Maple Leaf Square, Toronto. Dr. Sanjeev Sockalingam, Deputy Psychiatrist-in-Chief, University Health Network and Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Toronto, and Jodi Krah, Canadian Obesity Network's Public/Patient Advisor and Artist both spoke to an audience of close to 60 people giving perspectives from both that of a physician and patient.

Important takeaways from the event were:

- Weight bias is often under recognized. Research shows that over 60% of doctors are weight biased towards their patients.
- A health care provider's biases can have a profound impact on the patient's emotion, self image, and confidence.
- Investment in research and more education for health care providers is imperative to eliminate weight bias.
- Tools such as the 5A's of Obesity Management (<http://www.obesitynetwork.ca/5As>) can be highly supportive and create a better environment for patients. The tool is an easy-to-use roadmap that ensures sensitive, realistic, measurable, and sustainable obesity management strategies that focus on improving health and well-being, rather than simply aiming for numbers on a scale.

The event was well received by the audience who seemed impressed that CON-YYZ is dedicated to finding ways where we can all work together to create a sense of body acceptance and inclusivity in Canada.



