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Prevalence of Attrition in Obese Children Referred to UMMC

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Introduction:
Childhood obesity is a major global health issue worldwide. Management requires multidisciplinary care, but clinic retention remains a challenge. At UMMC, many children are referred mainly for screening. Limited caregiver awareness and unmet expectations may contribute to poor adherence.

Methods:
A retrospective study done for newly referred patients between 2020 to 2024 in UMMC Obesity Clinic analysing demographics, anthropometry, treatment and comorbidities. Default was defined as failure to attend after the first or second visit.

Results:
There was a total of 97 patients referred within the span of 5 years with the highest in 2020 of 26 referrals. The overall patient's mean age was 11.4 years and 12.3 years for boys and girls respectively. The mean height is 146.9cm (SDS 8), mean weight of 70.7kg (SDS 4) and mean BMI of 33kg/m2 (SDS 3.87) during the referral. The highest attrition rate is in 2020 with 69% defaulters (n=18) and the lowest in 2022 with 20%. As for the attrition group, equal gender distribution was observed (n=21). This group's mean age is 11.6 years old, and their mean BMI is 29.2kg/m2. Majority of the defaulters have comorbidities with 67% rate (n=27).

Discussion:
This study demonstrates an increasing number of referrals to Obesity Clinic starting from 2022. At the point of referral, the average patient's BMI reached Severe Obesity Class II. Majority of the defaulters have concomitant co-morbidities. Compared to the overall group, the attrition group showed a lower BMI with Obesity Class I. Highest defaulted rate in 2020 can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic era which disrupted treatment continuity due to quarantine restrictions.

Conclusion:
Attrition remains challenging. Improving education and caregiver involvement helps in long- term outcomes in paediatric obesity care.