

THE PLAY OF PERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND INFLUENCES ON BARIATRIC PATIENT'S DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

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***Abstract:** Bariatric surgery (Overweight surgery) is extensively accepted as one of the most effective treatments for obesity and weight loss, both in the short and long term. However, despite its proven physical and health success, many patients have difficulty sustaining long-term weight loss.*

Maintaining weight after surgery is a complex phenomenon that requires both physical and mental efforts. But the big question is which aspects of the mental part is related and can help the patient to maintain long-term health and wellness.

It is the personality and its multi-layered components that together with the physical component, can contribute to achieve a long-lasting effect - Namely the five-factor model of personality.

This article is trying to assess the link between psychology factors, particularly the five-triad personality types within bariatric patients, and how it affects their decision-making and healing process, for optimal patient care following my PhD study in Psychology.

***Keywords:** Obesity surgery, Overweight surgery, Bariatric surgery, Psychosocial predictors, Psychological treatment, Mental wellbeing, Weight loss, Mental health.*

Introduction

Bariatric surgery is an anatomy procedure that treats morbid obesity by dramatically reducing the size of the stomach and restricting the amount of food that can be consumed. (Margaret A. 2012). Studies have shown that bariatric surgery is effective in producing significant weight loss in the short and long-term, with weight loss up to 81.3% one year after the operations (Wendy A Brown, 2021).

In the last years there has been a dramatic escalation in the number of bariatric surgeries performed in Israel (ISMBS, 2020), However, maintaining those results and adopting a healthy

lifestyle over the years is very challenging in Israel. More than 60% of the post-surgery bariatric patients gained weight back after 4 years, also It was found that the number of repeat operations in Israel is the highest in the world, which is around 1 in 6. It is around 17% compared to the global average of only about 7% (State Comptroller's Office, 2019).

This remains an enigma since bariatric surgery not only improves weight loss and quality of life, but also improves mental health, motivation, and self-esteem measures (Suzanne Phelan, 2022).

From a purely physical standpoint, a patient's body weight will reach the point of maximum weight loss or weight stabilization between 18 to 24 months, where at the same time their Self-concept and Personality can change significantly. Without the right Pre-surgery proportions and Post-surgery treatment, it can impact natively the all process to adopt healthy lifestyle (María José Torrente-Sánchez (2021).

Israel is among the development countries with a high obesity rate (over 30kg in average weight), 29% of women who are obese and 26% of men who are obese (Ramos et. al., 2019), but also is one of the tops in the OECD countries in the number of Bariatric surgeries and repeat surgeries relative to the number of the population (IFSO Seventh Global Registry Report, 2022).

There are many reasons for gaining weight that are related to the patient's stage of behavior, such as:

- Physical;
- Social;
- Environmental;
- Culture;
- Self-care attention,

However researchers have identified a possible link between the patient's psychological stage to long-term success or failure (Sandra Jumbe, 2017). Psychological factors such as depression, low self-esteem, and lack of motivation may affect post-surgery patients, which can affect the success of the wellness process. On the other hand, a strongly developed personality has been shown to have a significant impact on the success of weight loss and self-care maintenance (Suzanne Phelan, 2022). Another important aspect for higher personal growth and functioning is the stage of reorganization, in which the application of certain techniques can

stabilize the personality by solving the problem or crisis, but it can also lead to maladaptive solutions.(Krasimir Ivanov, 2021).

In Israel, Psychological screening is one of the three evaluations potential patients must pass before getting the bariatric surgery approval (The State of Israel, the Ministry of Health, 2013), however NO post-surgery follow-up treatment is a part of the healthcare system procedure compared to other countries.

In this article I'm trying to review the link between the Five Factor Model / Big Five, which categorizes the majority of personal traits within five domains - Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness / Intellect (Colin G. DeYoung, 2010). Understanding how these traits can play a crucial role in helping patients navigate their weight loss and new lifestyle journey.

1. **Neuroticism:** Neuroticism describes the tendency to experience negative emotions and cognitions such as anxiety, depression, anger, and vulnerability (Colin G. DeYoung, 2010). Patients in high neuroticism may experience mood instability and negativity, higher levels of stress and anxiety which can potentially lead to non-compliance with post-operative instructions, reduced quality of life, emotional eating (Herpertz et al., 2004).
2. **Extraversion:** Individuals high in extraversion are likely more assertive and talkative, they are more socialized and open for interactions (Colin G. DeYoung, 2010). Extraverted patients may be more likely to seek out support and ask questions about their surgery Pre and Post, treatments and care contributing to higher satisfaction levels and good results in post-operation (Herpertz et al., 2004). Patients who attend support groups after bariatric surgery have an associated greater degree of weight loss (M. Livhits, 2009).
3. **Openness:** Individuals high in openness are more likely to explore new strategies for weight control, which can lead to choosing the Bariatric surgery procedure even knowing the risk associated with (Colin G. DeYoung, 2010). This trait may lead the patient to a more holistic approach to health life, combining nutrition, exercise, and other lifestyle changes.
4. **Agreeableness:** Agreeable Bariatric patients may find it easier to follow the Post surgery medical advice and instructions which are vital for achieving successful weight loss and healthy life. Agreeable patients appear to be associated with the ability to

control aggressive impulses and other socially disruptive emotions (Colin G. DeYoung, 2010), which are very common after the Bariatric surgery following the recovery stage. Agreeableness may lead to improved postoperative guidance behavior.

5. **Conscientiousness:** High levels of conscientiousness typically correlate with greater self-discipline, to be organized, which is vital to obtain schedules or routines that are important for the new lifestyle. Conscientiousness predicts behavior that promotes health and longevity (Colin G. DeYoung, 2010).

Societal influence is also essential in understanding the decision-making process for bariatric surgery patients. Perceived discrimination or societal pressure due to obesity might push patients towards bariatric surgery, even knowing and be aware of the high risk of this procedure. High conscientiousness, representing self-discipline and organization, may be associated with successful post-bariatric surgery outcomes.

Study Methods and Approach

A new multidisciplinary wellness behavior and a healthy lifestyle should be adopted by Bariatric patients in order to secure and maintain their new weight and health for many years to come. The connection between physical and mental health is essential for optimal recovery after a Bariatric surgery, however it seems that different approaches should be adopted for the different types of personality in order to secure success and long-term achievement.

As a part of my PhD study, I would like to assess and reveal how psychological attention and treatment affects a person, helping to increase the success rate in the Pre-surgery process evaluation and maintaining long-term success in Post-surgery process.

The research will review the impact and implications of social/community factors on the success of patients in Israel. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods will be carry out in Israel post-surgical patients.

An online survey will be used to conduct the quantitative survey, and personal interviews will be used for the qualitative research.

The research will be conducted through 2 pairs / parts:

Pair/Part 1: To reach bariatric surgery patients via the health centers and social networks.

The online survey will provide me with a convenient platform to approach a specific domain, and the participants will be able to respond quickly and at their convenience. In addition, the online survey participants will be able to complete the survey in multiple sessions, similar to the paper-based survey, but with a more efficient and green environment approach.

Pair/Part 2: 1x1/Personally conducted interviews.

The main idea of combining the personal interview as a part of my resource is to be able to evaluate and rate the personality factor and its multi-layered components in the psychological aspect in order to identify what are the factors and their level of influence that push the patients to go so far knowing (or not) the consequences behind the Bariatric surgery.

The personal interview will help to understand if and how the personality and its multi-layered components, together with the physical component, can contribute to achieve a long-lasting effect.

By emphasizing consequences and success rates in Israel, we are talking about a phenomenon that seems to be a combination of physical and mental. It is important to examine not only the physical components, but it is also vital to examine the patient's personality. That is why I have divided the research into two parts. The first part is a systematic survey that will structure the patient's idea of going through this intervention and understanding their personality. The second part will be a personalized predefined interview. During the interview, I will be able to understand their inner motives for going through this difficult and challenging procedure.

Conclusion:

Bariatric surgery may be an effective treatment option to lose weight and it is a life-changing journey, however long-term success depends on a variety of factors linked with an individual's personal psychology factors and societal influences such as cultural attitudes, and stereotypes about obesity impact the decision-making when addressing obesity treatment.

A deeper understanding of these connections could enhance the efficacy of obesity treatment and the success rate, which is considered very low in Israel. Following the State Comptroller's report, the Ministry of Health is poorly managing the entire field. Israel is one of the tops in the OECD countries in the number of overweight bypass surgeries relative to the number of the population, but at the same time the rate of repeat surgeries is among the highest as well. The State Comptroller links the high rate of repeat surgeries to the poor way health care providers treat people, pre and post surgery process (State Comptroller's Office, 2019).

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