Bariatric Nursing
Do your skills measure up?
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Objectives
- Discuss physiology of obesity
- Discuss problems, actual and potential related to the bariatric population
- Discuss specific nursing skill sets and care considerations for the bariatric patient population

Physiologic Changes:
Body Morphology
- BMI > 30
- Increased neck circumference
- Central adiposity
- Visceral fat
- Abdominal pannus
- Retracted genetalia
- Lipodystrophy of the limbs
Psychology

- Prejudice and discrimination
- Situational depression
- Low self esteem
- Societal pressure to be thin
- Physical pain and psychological distress
- Addiction

Body System Considerations

Cardiovascular System

- Proportional increase in circulating blood volume, plasma volume, and cardiac output
- Stroke volume rises resulting in hypertension and cardiomegaly
- Predisposition to VTE
- Stroke
Cardiovascular System
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Right ventricular dysfunction related to increased preload
- Pulmonary embolism
- Hyperlipidemia

Respiratory System
- Fixed thorax – decreased rib movement
- Decreased lung expansion
- Obesity hypoventilation syndrome
- Increased work of breathing
- Oropharyngeal changes
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Pulmonary hypertension

High Risk Airway
Critical care considerations

- Increased size does not = increased tidal volume; lung size remains the same.
- Increased chest wall impedance
- Restrictive lungs
- Increased sedation requirements
- Delayed recovery and potential for prolonged ventilator weaning.
- Recruitment maneuvers improve SaO2

Skin Changes

- Skin folds
- Excessive moisture accumulation
- Intertrigo
- Atypical pressure ulcers
- Problematic wound healing

Skin Changes

- Personal hygiene concerns
- Risk for wound dehiscence
- Cracking and fissures on plantar heel and foot has a correlation with obesity
- Recurring soft tissue infections (cellulitis of the limbs)
Let’s Not Forget

- Endocrine – adult onset diabetes
- GI/GU
- Musculoskeletal stressors

Nursing Management

- Physical size complicates basic interventions
- Assessments must be focused
- Co-morbidities cannot be excluded
- Nurses must be clinically astute
- Resuscitation measures are complex
- Safe handling and immobility challenges

Assessment Skills

- Auscultation of heart and lung sounds
- Vital signs
- Abdominal inspection
- Skin assessment
- Differences in elimination
- Altered sleep patterns
- Nutritional assessment
- Psychosocial needs
Body Mechanics – safe handling

- Nursing activities exceed safe working loads
- Limb elevation
- Reaching
- Ambulation of patients
- Lifting equipment
- Bariatric equipment
- Space in the environment

Equipment Essentials

Remember we should always use specialist equipment to prevent manual handling injuries.
Maintaining Dignity

¬ Obesity is a disease process - not a label
¬ Discourage social stigmatization and discrimination
¬ Examine nursing attitudes
¬ Discuss acceptance and nonjudgmental approach
¬ Promote sensitivity
¬ Provide staff education

Dignity and Sensitivity

Poker Face
Do your skills measure up?

- Astute assessment skills
- Resuscitation challenges
- IV insertion expertise
- Skin care
- Pharmacology
- Physiological and psychological care
- Compassion with sincerity *and* without prejudice

Parting thoughts...

- *Thou seest I have more flesh than another man and therefore more frailty.*
  - *King Henry the Fourth, Part I - Act III.*
  - *Scene III*

Questions