

Weight counseling declining among primary care doctors

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(HealthDay)—From 1995-1996 to 2007-2008, the rate of weight counseling provided by primary care physicians (PCPs) decreased significantly, even for those patients with obesity and weight-related comorbidities such as diabetes and hypertension, according to research published in the February issue of *Medical Care*.

Jennifer L. Kraschnewski, M.D., M.P.H., of the Penn State Hershey Medical Center and College of Medicine, and colleagues used data from the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey to determine current (2007 to 2008) trends in weight-related counseling by PCPs compared with 1995 to 1996.

The researchers found that there was a significant decrease in weight counseling, from 7.8 percent of visits in 1995 to 1996 to 6.2 percent in 2007 to 2008 (adjusted odds ratio, 0.64). PCPs also provided less diet, exercise, and weight-related counseling. The decreases in the odds of receiving weight counseling were greater for those with

hypertension (47 percent), diabetes (59 percent), and obesity (41 percent).

"PCPs serve on the frontlines of health care and must be actively engaged to help address the nation's [obesity epidemic](#)," the authors write. "The barriers to providing weight-related counseling need to be defined and understood to allow for the development of [new tools](#) for primary care-based [weight management](#) that can target successful physician engagement."

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