

Hospitalized COVID-19 patients with obesity are significantly more likely to need ICU care

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People with obesity who are hospitalized with COVID-19 have a significantly higher rate of ICU admissions and longer duration of ICU stay compared to people with a normal body mass index (BMI), according to a study presented virtually at ENDO 2021, the Endocrine Society's annual meeting.

"The association between [obesity](#) and a more severe clinical course of COVID-19 highlights the vulnerability of this population during the current pandemic and the need for public health efforts to prevent and treat obesity, in the current pandemic and beyond," said lead researcher Yu Mi Kang, M.D., Ph.D., of Yale New Haven Health in New Haven, Conn.

More than 40% of Americans live with obesity, one of the significant risk factors for COVID-19. Kang and colleagues wanted to determine and describe the impact of obesity on the clinical course of COVID-19, compared with individuals who do not

have obesity.

The researchers analyzed data from 3,268 [adult patients](#) hospitalized with COVID-19 at five hospitals within the Yale New Haven Health System between March and November 2020.

Among hospitalized patients, 43% had obesity, 15.8% died, and 24.2% required ICU-level care. Patients with obesity were 26% more likely to need ICU care overall than patients who did not have obesity. COVID-19 patients with higher body-mass index (BMI) measurements were even more likely to require ICU care. Individuals with severe obesity, or a BMI of 40 or higher, were twice as likely to need ICU care compared with patients with a normal BMI. The study did not find a higher risk of death in people with obesity compared to those with normal BMI.

"Our work underscores the impact of obesity on the course of COVID-19 and emphasizes the need to ensure that obesity is given appropriate consideration for risk stratification, vaccination protocols and in-hospital COVID-19 management," Kang said.

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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