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Problems with the NICE guideline for exenatide exposed in the Association of British Clinical Diabetologists (ABCD) nationwide exenatide audit

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Introduction

According to NICE, exenatide use:

- should be restricted to BMI \geq 35.0 kg/m² and HbA1c \geq 7.5% and patients not on insulin
- should only be continued if both HbA1c and weight at 6 months have reduced by at least 1% and 3% of initial body weight respectively

Methods

In the ABCD nationwide exenatide audit, 315 contributors from 126 centres submitted data on 6717 patients. Patients with HbA1c and weight data at both baseline and 6 months were analysed to compare reality with NICE recommendations. Analyses: 1) all such patients; 2) exclude patients with BMI <35kg/m² unless there would be a professional hazard using insulin, HbA1c<7.5% or on triple oral therapy or on insulin.

Results

Analysis 1: 1882 patients. Over 6 months mean HbA1c and weight fell ($p < 0.001$) by 0.78% from 9.47% to 8.69% and by 6.6 kg from 114.2 to 107.6 kg respectively. 68.2% had HbA1c reduction, 89.2% had a weight reduction and 60.1% had a reduction in both. With regard to the NICE criteria for success 67.9% achieved the weight loss criteria, 44.9% achieved the HbA1c criteria but only 28.6% achieved both.

Analysis 2: 1081 patients. Over 6 months mean HbA1c and weight fell ($p < 0.001$) by 0.96% from 9.73% to 8.76% and by 6.8 kg from 117.1 to 110.4 kg respectively. 72.1% had HbA1c reduction, 88.6% had a weight reduction and 63.4% had a reduction in both. With regard to the NICE criteria for success 66.9% achieved the weight loss criteria, 51.8% achieved the HbA1c criteria but only 32.9% achieved both.

There were many patients who achieved a substantial reduction in HbA1c but not weight and vice versa.

Conclusion

On exenatide in real clinical practice:

- Over 60% of patients achieve the ideal of both weight loss and fall in HbA1c
- However many patients experience a predominant response to only one of weight or HbA1c with more minimal response to the other
- Hence only about 30% achieve the NICE guideline standard

The NICE guideline should change to acknowledge that either significant weight loss or significant HbA1c response may represent a beneficial response