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Psychopathology and health problems before and after bariatric surgery

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Obesity treatment has been a challenge to professionals and researchers, highlighting the need to clarify factors related to success. In the present study qualitative and quantitative data were used to understand the personal expectations and perceptions, health and psychological changes, during the obesity treatment process.

In-depth interviews and self-report measures were used to obtain qualitative and quantitative data, respectively. Thirty bariatric patients were evaluated before surgery, at 6- and 12-month follow-up.

After one year, 66.6 % did not lose the expected weight. Data showed that, before surgery, failure cases see obesity as an identity and unmodifiable trait, successful patients conceptualize obesity as a disease. Those groups did not differ on the other qualitative or quantitative dimensions. At 6- and 12-month follow-ups, failure cases had the highest BMI, psychopathology, health problems and complaints and less %EWL than success cases. Successes were also different in their perception and expected dimensions of bariatric surgery, showing more positive evaluations.

Before surgery, success and failure cases are not different in the quantitative measures, but have distinct discourses related to the understanding of their obesity and treatment. While failures comprehend obesity as a personal trait, successes highlight the personal impact of obesity. Twelve months after the surgery groups are distinguishable, with successes highlighting a positive perception of surgery, whereas failures valued unexpected dimensions. These differences should be considered as an indicator to be used in order to promote greater effectiveness of surgery.